BING

Winter
2013

No. 165

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

Web sites:
Club: www.club-crosby.org
Bing Crosby Enterprises: www.BingCrosby.com
BING magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Honorary President: KATHRYN CROSBY
Honorary Members: Harry Crosby - Mary Crosby Brodka - Nathaniel Crosby - Phillip Crosby Jr. Ken Barnes - Pat Boone - Rory Burke - Nick Clooney - Michael Feinstein - Rich Little Regis Philbin
Special Distribution: Gonzaga University - Hofstra University - Library of Congress - Spokane Public Library - Tacoma Public Library -

Magazine Editor
MALCOLM MACFARLANE
3 Osborne Close
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 2EE, UK
Tel: 01625 528942
e-mail: Macwilmslo@aol.com

Secretary and Treasurer
MICHAEL CRAMPTON
19 Carrholm Crescent
Chapel Allerton
Leeds LS7 2NL , UK
Tel/Fax: 0113 2689556
e-mail: mdcrampton@gmail.com

American Co-Editor
GREG VAN BEEK
3006 Emerald Street,
West Bend
Wisconsin 53095, USA
Tel: (262) 343-2986
e-mail: tvanbeek@execpc.com

American / Canadian Representative
F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS
5608 North 34th Street
Arlington
Virginia 22207, USA
Tel/Fax: (703) 241-5608
e-mail: wigbing2012@gmail.com

Australian / New Zealand Representative
DAVID CURRINGTON
34A Geoffrey Street,
Turramurra, New South Wales
Australia 2074
Tel: (02) 9440 2434
email: dcurro@comcen.com.au

CONTRIBUTORS
American Contributors: Martin McQuade / John Newton / Carolyn Schneider/ Maureen Solomon
British Contributors: J. Richard Baker / Ken Crossland / Bob Halls / Keith Parkinson
Canadian Contributor: Gord Atkinson

Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 2014 are:

USA and Canada	US $25 per annum
UK	£15 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£16 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$40 per annum
Rest of World	£18 per annum

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::
(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © Copyright ICC 2013.

EDITORIAL

Candle glow and mistletoe, it's Christmas time again, and with warm wishes of the season, allow me to welcome both new and long-time members to the winter edition of BING magazine. It's that time of year when, inevitably, there is a renewed interest in Bing Crosby and his holiday offerings on film and record. While we'd all prefer the same level of interest could be maintained all year long, we are grateful for his being such a large part of the Christmas season. A major aspect of the legacy he left for all of us.

Speaking of Christmas, namely Christmas gifts, Richard Baker has some tempting new offerings in his *Keeping Track* column found later in this issue. HLC Properties, LTD, in co-operation with Universal Music Enterprises, has released two brand new compact discs, including Bing's first concept album that has never been reissued officially, that you're sure to want to add to your collections. There's also a new offering from our friends at Sepia Records, along with one of Bing's classic films making its debut in high definition Blu-ray format to help making shopping easier for the serious music and film collector (and Crosby fan!) on your list. Richard sorts it all out in grand fashion.

And just recently, November 25th to be exact, our Honorary President, Kathryn Crosby, has celebrated a milestone birthday, so we all send her our best regards and happiest of birthday wishes.

As the year draws to a close and we look back at 2013, one just has to peruse through the previous three issues of BING magazine to see that it was indeed a good year for collectors of the amazing body of work Bing Crosby left behind. We all can look forward to more new releases in 2014. Certainly there will be more wonderful new compact discs from Bing Crosby Enterprises, but I know we also would love to see more DVD releases of Bing's classic television specials, too. His 1973 Christmas TV special, filmed on location in Sun Valley, Idaho with real snow would be ideal, perhaps paired with the 1975 Christmas offering, reuniting a couple of song and dance men on camera, thirty years after they last appeared together on screen in Paramount's *Blue Skies*. Whatever the year may bring, and whatever treasures may be unearthed from Bing's basement, they will no doubt be excitedly welcomed by all.

With that, allow me to quote Bing from his Christmas TV specials in the 1970's; "I wish you the warmth and love of the Christmas season, every day of the year."

Greg Van Beek **tvanbeek@execpc.com**

We are very proud of the honorary members of our club listed on the opposite page and it is with great sadness that we announce the death of **Gia Prima,** the widow of Louis Prima. We send our condolences to her family. Further details of Gia's life follow on a subsequent page.

In some ways, Bing's memory seems to be fading with very few mentions of him in the traditional media nowadays. Few of his films are shown on TV. He does however continue to crop up frequently on radio but the really pleasing thing in this social media age is that his Facebook page is incredibly popular. So it's a mixed picture, but, as Greg says, Christmas is a-comin' and Bing will be ubiquitous for several weeks. Wonderful!

We have an eclectic mixture in this issue for you with a detailed review of the Leeds meeting by Bob Halls, a fascinating account of a *Command Performance* show in 1975 plus our regular contributors doing what they do best. Wig Wiggins returns to our pages as well with a look at the myth of the 1947 recording of "White Christmas". Ken Crossland continues his search for his missing 78s and he has even pressed his long-suffering wife, Linda, into action too. There have been some more excellent 'Bing's Basement' broadcasts and *Bing on the Box* is the place to read about these and about a new Irish TV documentary in Gaelic!

My apologies to those whose articles I have not been able to use this time. I had enough material to fill half of another magazine which is amazing considering the time that has passed since Bing's death.

You will all recognise the scene from *White Christmas* which it seemed entirely appropriate to use this time as the front cover. This was kindly supplied by Arthur Blood. Our back cover was specially prepared for Trevor Wagstaff by his friend Martin Clinton. It was prepared as a "What if Marvel Comics had decided to publish a Bing Crosby super-hero book" exercise and Trevor thought that it might give us all a chuckle. Many thanks Trevor and Martin.

Malcolm Macfarlane **macwilmslo@aol.com**

CONTENTS

	Page Nos.
Editorial	3
Secretary / Treasurer's Report	4
Gia Maione Prima	5
You often had to be quick to catch it	5
We're Not Dressing in Syracuse!	6
Bing's Boyhood Home Centennial	7
Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival	7
Movie and TV Word Seek	7
It's Christmas Eve, and Bing Crosby is on the air	8
Bing's Treasure Island Broadcast	10
Howard Crosby at Shannon	12
Trading Post	13
Books 'n' Bing	14
Celluloid Crosby	17
Bingerama	18
The Myth About Bing's "White Christmas"	20
Bing and Christmas	22
One Sweet Letter from You	24
Ken Crossland's "Crosbyana"	27
The Crosby 45s – British Listing	28
Leeds 2013	31
Bing on the Box	39
Once in a While	44
Gord Atkinson's 'The Crosby Years'	47
The Way We Were	48
Keeping Track	51

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

As I write these words for our winter issue I am listening to tracks from the new CDs which have been released by BCE. Both are gems and there is some rare material featured which many members will not have heard previously. The tracks are beautifully recorded and the notes, photography and packaging maintain the high standards achieved with previous issues. These are very collectable CDs with alternative tracks and I urge all members to buy copies to encourage the release of further gems from Bing's basement and Universal Music.

The Sepia AFRS CD has been very well received by members and for me the track 'Johnny Doughboy' stands out as this is the first time it has been heard with such clarity. The other tracks capture Bing's wartime musical exploits singing to the troops, beautifully. Please send for your copy if you have not already done so.

Leeds 2013 was a joyous event with a splendid programme devised once again by Malcolm Macfarlane. Malcolm's expertise was evident throughout the day and members sat enthralled as Bing sang out to us on the big screen. Bob Halls will report more fully elsewhere but here I would like to express my appreciation to Malcolm for his professionalism in devising his sixth annual tribute. It was also a privilege to welcome returning members and especially those from afar, namely – Renato Failace (Brazil), Jeremy Rose (France) and Anita and Ron Field from Washington State.

This is the time of year when Wig and I make our appeal to members to be generous and speedy in renewing their subscriptions due on the 1st of January. We will both welcome early responses to our renewal requests.

NEW MEMBERS

UNITED STATES

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members with a wish that their association with the club will bring them much interest and enjoyment.

Lance Blair (Jamestown, New York), Doris Conway (Hammond, Indiana), Pierre Fracalanza (Livonia, Michigan), David Lobosco (Glenshaw, Pennsylvania), Kathleen Morrow (El Dorado, Kansas), Mike Pierce (Tillamook, Oregon), Carl Riesinger (St. Louis, Missouri), Lloyd Spencer (Bella Vista, Arkansas), Tim Welden (Palos Heights, Illinois), Nicole Veith (Fond du Lac, Wisconsin), Robert Boyer (Frederick, Maryland).

DONATIONS

We very much appreciate the financial help provided by the following generous members from: -

AUSTRALIA

Hazel Nunn

BRAZIL

Renato Failace

UNITED KINGDOM

Jeremy Rose, Ken Shaw, Tom Wallace, Norman Jones and Bob Halls have made exceptional donations to our funds and their benevolence is supported by kind donations from –

Dennis Saville, Frank Startup, Nicolas Morrison, Jim Reilly, Bob Davies, John Marshall, Seamus Kelly, Harry C Ross, Arthur Blood, Johnny Jones, Ian Patience, Charles Wilkinson, John R Byrd, Stan Mayer, John Stiles, Des Cusack, Dr Noel Buckley and Mr P Jeffrey.

Donations and legacies are very welcome and gratefully acknowledged and we thank our beneficiaries for their continuing support.

DEATHS

Sadly, we have learned of the deaths of Bill Wesley, (Upminster, Essex - age 95), Terry Barnard, (Ipswich, Suffolk), Mr D Stubbs (Whitefield, Manchester - age 83), Frank Burton (Horton Heath, Hampshire – age 87) and although not a member of ICC we are saddened to

learn of the passing of Richard Watts, a devoted Crosby fan of Pacific Grove, California. British born and educated, he served with the RAF during WWII and emigrated to the US in 1958. In later years, Richard became personally acquainted with Bing's brother Bob and sister Mary Rose. Richard had a beautiful singing voice and a wonderful sense of humour. He is survived by his loving wife Betty.

We extend our sincere condolences to the relatives and friends of the above.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 1 to 10

These attractive CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £7.50 and the price for Europe £8.50. Members in the US & Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington. The price for members in the rest of the world is £9.50.

BING CROSBY in the Kraft Music Hall

Bing Crosby in the Hall and our KMH 75th Anniversary Tribute CDs remain available from your secretary priced at £7.50.

LEEDS 2014 (49th meeting)

Sunday October 5th is the date for your diary

My warmest greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton **mdcrampton@gmail.com**

Gia Maione Prima

Gia, who was one of our honorary members, died on September 23, 2013 in Florida at the age of 72. She was an American singer and the widow of singer Louis Prima. She first gained notice in 1962, when she was signed to sing lead female vocals for Prima and his band. Louis Prima had divorced Keely Smith, his former lead vocalist, the year before. Smith left the orchestra, creating the opening that Gia Maione filled. The young singer's rich voice was an ideal match for Prima's rugged jazz riffs, and the couple performed and recorded together until Prima fell ill in 1975.

In 1963 she married Prima, becoming his fifth and final wife. She had two children by Prima, Louis Jr. and Lena. In 1965, the couple recorded *Let's Fly with Mary Poppins*, a popular album containing jazz versions of songs from the popular Disney film. The couple routinely performed at locations such as the Copacabana, the Sahara Hotel, the Sands Hotel, and the Palmer House in Chicago. Although paired with Prima near the end of his career, Prima, Maione and orchestra remained extremely popular and sang to sold out crowds up to the time of Prima's serious illness.

Gia with Frank Sinatra and her husband in 1965.

In 1975, while undergoing an operation in Los Angeles to remove a benign brain tumor, Louis Prima lapsed into a coma and never regained consciousness. He died almost three years later on August 24, 1978 in his home town of New Orleans.

The Prima estate was tied up in litigation for almost 15 years following Prima's death. In 1994, Maione assumed control of the Prima archives, at which time she set about managing his vast musical legacy. She dedicated herself to remastering and re-releasing Prima's work. Among her other duties, Maione handled the licensing of Prima's work for television, film and advertising, such as the use of 'Jump, Jive and Wail' for a series of Gap ads in the late 1990s. While living in Island Heights, New Jersey in 2002, she was another who filed suit against Universal Music Group claiming that proper royalties had not been paid.

She is survived by her two children Lena Prima Fahey, Louis Prima Jr., 2 grandchildren Anthony Jordan Prima and Jacob Prima, sister June Maione Kassel and long time companion Frank Savannah.

"You often had to be quick to catch it. The guy was funny."

Paul Rigby writing in the August edition of Hi-Fi World had spotted the first batch of Universal reissues.

My musical education took place by my mother's side, sitting in front of the TV, watching classic films. She was devoted to the things and is currently a walking encyclopaedia on the culture of the Hollywood studio system, knowing what colour socks Jimmy Stewart wore on any given day and what Barbara Stanwyck ate for

breakfast.

My most striking memories were of classic Hollywood and UK movies and, especially, musicals of all types. This is where my fascination with the Great American Songbook, Tin Pan Alley and other nooks and crannies of the songwriter's art, on both sides of the Pond, lies. This is also why I am very picky about watching new films ('new' being anything after 1970).

The classic films informed me about some of the best vocalists that the world has ever seen. People like Frank Sinatra, Howard Keel, Doris Day and a certain Bing Crosby.

Two things always struck me about Crosby. Firstly, and this is often ignored...his wit. The man couldn't help but sneak an aside in between two lines of a song or as a quick retort to a piece of film dialogue before he returned to the script. You often had to be quick to catch it. The guy was funny.

The second thing that hit me square between the eyes was his demeanour. This aspect has often been reported upon. Crosby was so relaxed during his film, TV and vocal performances that he almost fell off his chair. I would venture to suggest, however, that he used his relaxed persona to make time for himself.

It's like being asked a difficult question, pretending not to have heard it, then having it repeated to provide more time to consider the answer. I wonder if Crosby utilised the 'bending time' tactic because, within himself, he didn't necessarily need it – his quick wit proved that. If he could slow time down with his relaxed demeanour, he could give himself more space to consider his next move, his next line and how he would deliver his next song.

I recently watched a documentary on The Sex Pistols, the best I've ever seen on the group, incidentally, 'The Filth and the Fury' (only a fiver from Amazon) in which John Lydon ('Johnny Rotten') confessed to the fear of going on stage because "I never knew what I was going to do next". Crosby always did, he always thought ahead and manipulated time and events to suit his performance, aiding his longevity as a performer.

These thoughts were triggered while I was in a local record shop – yes, a few still exist – stumbling upon ten, newly reissued CDs from Universal. For any fans out there, they include: 'El Senor Bing, 'On the Sentimental Side', 'Return to Paradise', 'A Southern Memoir', 'Seasons', 'Bing in Dixieland', 'Bing on Broadway', 'Bing Sings the Great American Songbook', 'Bing Sings the Sinatra Songbook' and 'Bing & Rosie: The Crosby-Clooney Radio Sessions'.

One thing, though, they all looked rather familiar but I couldn't place them so I talked to a man who knew, the magazine editor for the International Club Crosby (www.club-crosby.org), Malcolm Macfarlane (check out the mag at www.bingmagazine.co.uk, they offer a regular print version for members, back issues are available).

"All of these CDs were issued by Collector's Choice Music in 2010," confirmed Macfarlane, "and were becoming hard to acquire so it was good to see that Universal Music Enterprises and the Crosby family have forged a new partnership to make these albums available again."

Some of the CDs available in this batch are of particular interest, as Macfarlane can attest. "'A Southern Memoir', from 1975, had never been issued on CD and it was a delight to have it in such wonderful quality with some alternative takes.

'El Señor Bing' is a little unusual because it contains the tracks from this 1960 album in both mono and stereo. There are also a few rare radio tracks included too.

Something we Crosby fans knew about but had never heard was 'On the Sentimental Side'. This was a sing-along type album laid down in 1962 but never released. Robert Bader, the producer of all of these new albums, had found separate master tapes for the vocal and the backing and he has done a grand job in putting them together.

Similarly with 'Return to Paradise Islands', Robert had to remix the album, because the original issue was poorly put together. What was a poor-ish LP has been improved by bringing Bing's voice forward so that it was not drowned by the Nelson Riddle accompaniment.

The album everyone had been waiting for was 'Seasons'. This was Bing's final album and there were a lot of requests for it to be issued on CD. Mr. Bader has also added the songs Bing did for the BBC in his last radio broadcast in 1977, plus some poems that he did for a charitable venture."

It's good to see that amongst the host of Internet-related music currently deluging the market, that the legends have not been forgotten. My mum will be pleased.

Paul Rigby

We're Not Dressing in Syracuse!

Syracuse Cinephile Society began its 12-week "Monday Nights at the Movies" fall series at the Spaghetti Warehouse in Syracuse, New York on September 16 and the opening film was Bing's film *We're Not Dressing*. The pre-show publicity read as follows:

> 9/16 WE'RE NOT DRESSING (1934). Director: Norman Taurog. Cast: Bing Crosby, Carole Lombard, George Burns, Gracie Allen, Ethel Merman, Leon Errol, Ray Milland. A shipwreck results in a group of passengers being marooned on a desert island and forced to fend for themselves. This fun musical-comedy features the Crosby hits "Love Thy Neighbor", "May I?", "Goodnight, Lovely Little Lady" and others. One of Bing's most popular 1930s films.

Bing's Boyhood Home Centennial

The 100th Anniversary of Bing Crosby's boyhood home, 508 E. Sharp Ave., was celebrated on Saturday, October 26, 2013; 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. The Advocates of the Bing Crosby Theater hosted an open house and cake during Gonzaga's Fall Family Weekend. This event was free and open to the public.

In July 1913, Harry and Catherine Crosby moved with their six children (No. 7 on the way) into the nine-room, two-story home. Bing Crosby's father had the house built to accommodate his large family. Catherine had purchased the property for $1 from the Pioneer Educational Society, a Jesuit organization that owned much land around Gonzaga. Numerous Catholic families built their homes in this neighborhood, which became known as "the Holy Land" or "the Little Vatican."

The Crosby home

The house served as the Crosby family's home for 23 years, including when Bing attended Gonzaga High School and Gonzaga University (1914-24). The C. P. Higgins family purchased the home from the Crosby family in 1936 for $3,600, and owned it until 1978. The Gonzaga Alumni Association purchased the house in 1980. The Crosby Alumni House was used for alumni events with staff offices upstairs unitl 2010, when the Alumni Association moved to the Heutter Mansion across the street. Afterwards, the Crosby House was used for office space for a couple of departments.

Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival

This 8th annual celebration of Spokane's most famous export expands this year to two days and presents a special new feature – *On the Bus with Bing*, a motor coach tour of the places in Spokane where Bing lived and played as he grew up in the city.

The festival at the Bing Crosby Theater at Sprague and Lincoln in downtown Spokane takes place Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 14 & 15, with a single $8 admission charge good for both days' events (the bus tour ticket is separate). Tickets are readily available at the door and also can be purchased through Ticketswest. Children 12 and under are admitted free.

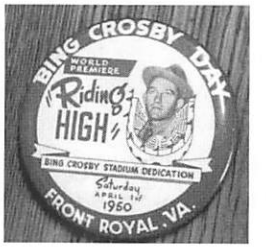
At the theater, there will be a live musical performance by Bing nephew Howard Crosby, a display of Crosby photos, a replica of Bing's famous denim tuxedo, Bing merchandise and a raffle (with such prizes as overnight stays at area hotels and Bing Crosby memorabilia). And, of course, the highlight will be the showing of the iconic film *White Christmas*.

Here's the schedule of events at the Bing Crosby Theater:
Saturday, Dec. 14
11:00 a.m. Film: *White Christmas*
1:30 p.m. Film: *Going My Way*
Sunday, Dec. 15
12:30 p.m. Film: *Holiday Inn*
3:00 p.m. Film: *High Society*
5:30 p.m. Live Performance: Howard Crosby presents holiday favorites
6:00 p.m. Film: *White Christmas*

Growing up in Spokane was integral to making Bing Crosby who he was, so the Advocates for the Bing Crosby Theater has created a way for residents and visitors alike to retrace some of Bing's footsteps in the city. *On the Bus with Bing* will be a motor coach tour on Sunday, Dec. 15 only, sponsored by the ABCT and conducted by Group Coordinators. In addition to visiting places from Bing's past, there will be a stop at the Crosbyana Room at Gonzaga University. And, as an added bonus, the ticket for the bus tour also provides admission for the 5:30 p.m. live performance by Howard Crosby and the 6 p.m. showing of *White Christmas* at the Bing Crosby Theater.

Movie & TV Word Seek

Bill Piccone and Martin McQuade drew our attention to the Penny Press holiday special which contains a letterbox special on page 23 titled Bing Crosby Christmas Specials. You have to fill in missing words relating to Bing and Christmas. The magazine will only be on sale until December 10 so don't delay. (http://www.pennydellpuzzles.com/)



It's Christmas Eve and Bing Crosby in on the air

Greg Van Beek has a seasonal theme for us.

Following the demise of the traditional weekly Bing Crosby variety show in the spring of 1954, to be replaced by a nightly 15 minute 'disc-jockey' format show, radio listeners missed out on a full-fledged, half-hour Christmas program hosted by Crosby the first time in twenty years. Such was not to be the case in 1955, however, when the undisputed voice of Christmas embarked on one of his most ambitious radio projects ever; a transcribed one-hour Christmas spectacular featuring guest artists that spanned the entire globe. It was to be called, aptly, *A Christmas Sing with Bing around the World*. At 9 pm, Eastern Time on Christmas Eve, Bing Crosby would once again take to the air.

Insurance Company of America, or INA, spent some $30,000 to sponsor this venture, which was quite a risky move, given the dwindling state of radio listeners by the mid-1950's. INA, incidentally, is the oldest stock insurance company in the United States, founded in Philadelphia in 1792. It was one of the largest American insurance companies of the 19th and 20th centuries before co-founding CIGNA in 1982. Since 1999 it has been a subsidiary of global insurer ACE Limited. The venture paid off, and went on to become a much beloved annual Christmas tradition for the next seven years.

The CBS Radio Network broadcast the show, carried by some 200 stations along with hook-ups on the CBC, AFRS, and VOA for a truly global listening experience. The program was produced by Bill Morrow and Sam Pierce, and directed by Murdo Mackenzie, long-time Crosby collaborators on radio. Ken Carpenter was the obvious choice for announcer, but gone was the John Scott Trotter orchestra, replaced here by Paul Weston and augmented by the use of the Norman Luboff Choir. For the 'around the world' aspect, the program included cut-in's of carols and hymns from France, Rome, and Canada, along with stops in the U.S. at St. Louis, Salt Lake City, and Hollywood.

The biggest gimmick was a write-in contest wherein children were to write an essay on 'What Christmas Means To Me'. Some 70,000 letters poured in to CBS, and the winner was seven year-old Delores Short who had spent her whole life in Pine Ridge, Kentucky Children's Home. She read her letter on the program. Bing promised her a bicycle, gifts for the other kids in the home and a B29 crew out of a USAAF base in Alaska would be dropping the letter over the North Pole for Santa's mail bag.

Needless to say, with all of the exposure across the dial and around the world, the program became one of the most listened to shows of the year. Plans were quickly under way for a second installment in 1956. While in New York on November 13th of that year, Bing met with CBS Radio president Arthur Hull Hayes and Vice-President of programming Howard Barnes to discuss the upcoming broadcast. This year, they would feature a few big name guest stars including Rosemary Clooney, who would be in the studio with Bing, along with Maurice Chevalier, and Sarah Churchill who contributed from Paris and London respectively.

On Friday, December 14, 1956, from 7:45 a.m.–1:45 p.m., the second now-annual *Christmas Sing with Bing* was transcribed at CBS in Los Angeles. The photos which accompany this article were taken that day at the recording session. They capture Rosemary Clooney with her young son Miguel, a representative from INS presenting an early Christmas present to Bing, an overhead view of Paul Weston conducting the orchestra, with Norman Luboff's choir on the other side of the stage divider, Paul Weston conversing with Rosie, and Buddy Cole standing at the piano. For those who wished to be a fly-on-the wall at one of these historic broadcasts, these photos offer a glimpse in time of what it was like to be a part of the excitement.

The program aired 10 days later, resulting in a frantic editing schedule to get the taped segments from 'around the world' to Hollywood in time for the broadcast on Monday December 24th, once again at 9 pm in the East.

Coincidentally, two days before the broadcast, Decca Records' album (DL 8419 for LP, and ED-850 for 45 rpm) of the previous year's inaugural broadcast entered the *Billboard* charts at number 21 in the top 200 albums of the week. The magazine said of the album upon its release in their December 8th issue:

> *"This borrowing from the CBS radio program makes one of the solidest holiday packages to come along, a prime candidate for immediate store exposure. Singer brings superb projection to nine out of 19 selected Christmas carols and hymns, with smoothest of assists from Norman Luboff choir and Paul Weston's ork. Other bands are contributed by various Canadian and European choruses, including the Vatican choir. Descriptive intros of each number by Crosby add a fine personalized touch, and his arrangement of "Silent Night" should be on every jock's Christmas Eve agenda. Cover, featuring Crosby photo backed by United Nations motif, is sound sales bait."*

Variety reviewed the 1956 *Christmas Sing* broadcast in its January 2, 1957 issue:

On Christmas Eve, a songfest with Bing Crosby,

interlaced with other show biz personalities, as well as pickups from many corners of the globe, proved to be good listening, showcasing radio as a still dazzling entertainment medium, the mobility of which is hard to beat. The holiday show was better in the first half than in the second, bogged down somewhat by a repetitious format, and what seemed to be obtruding commercials. But as a whole, it was an appealing, popular show in the spirit of the holiday... Der Bingle was in fine voice, singing such holiday favorites as "White Christmas", "Happy Holiday", "Jingle Bells" and "Silent Night". In warm style, he handled his emcee chores, all neatly woven into the transcription.

For Bing and CBS radio, the network which gave him his start as a solo artist in 1931, everything would come full circle before years' end when on December 31st, the final broadcast of Bing's nightly 15 minute radio show aired. Bing would continue to do radio work for CBS, however sporadically, until 1960 when he commenced what amounted to his final hurrah on the fledgling medium, 'The Bing Crosby – Rosemary Clooney Show'. This was a 20 minute show aimed at female listeners and was broadcast 5 days a week at 11:40 a.m.. Between February 29, 1960 and September 28, 1962, some 675 Crosby-Clooney Shows were broadcast in 130 weeks.

From Chesterfield, to Woodbury, from Kraft to Philco, back to Chesterfield, and finally to G.E., Bing delighted audiences for a staggering 31 years on network radio. No doubt one of the highlights of this aspect of his career will forever be the 8 years he brought Yuletide cheer for an hour each December 24th on *A Christmas Sing with Bing*.

Greg Van Beek **tvanbeek@execpc.com**

BING'S TREASURE ISLAND BROADCAST

Back in 1975, Bing took part in a re-creation of a *Command Performance* broadcast on Treasure Island, San Francisco Bay. What was the background to this? John Jensen explains.

Bing's participation in the Treasure Island radio broadcast of October 5, 1975, came about in a most unusual way.

In 1975 I was the general manager of KMPX radio station in San Francisco. A couple of years earlier we had inaugurated a format of playing the music of the 1930s and 40s with an occasional radio show or two. It was unique and drew some good local and national attention. Sadly, the owner of the station passed away and there were rumblings the station would soon be sold. A freeze was put on hiring and promotion. I was given permission to promote the station as long as it was at no expense, which resulted in some creative and unusual ways of getting us attention.

It was early summer of that year when Commander George Vercessi, the Public Affairs Officer for the 12th Naval District on Treasure Island came by the station to request if KMPX would be willing to do a live broadcast from there on October 5th, the 200th anniversary of the US Navy

The more I thought about it, the more I realized that this could be far bigger than just playing some march music for 30 minutes on our station. I asked George if he'd be open to us recreating a *Command Performance* type broadcast of World War II and to get some of the original people who were part of those broadcasts to participate.

Command Performance had been one of the most popular shows sent overseas to our troops during the war and Hollywood's top entertainers like Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Jack Benny donated their time and talents to be on these specially recorded broadcasts never to be heard stateside.

George loved the idea.

WE APPROACH BING

Now the work began. I knew no one in Hollywood and I had no money to pay anyone. Up until that point I had not met Bing but knew that if we got him to participate every one else would step forward. But we knew a small FM station asking an entertainer of his stature to do a radio show for us would get an automatic rejection. I had an idea. I asked Commander Vercessi if he thought Rear Admiral John T. Coughlin, USN, Commandant Twelfth Naval District, would write to Bing on his Navy stationery requesting his participation in a live 200th anniversary show on the base. The Admiral agreed. He included a special phone number from our station and I instructed our receptionist to answer with, "Treasure Island Command Performance," rather than our call letters and waited to see what would happen. Yeah, we were stretching it a bit, but we didn't want to be turned down before we even started.

John interviews Bing on a later occasion.

Sure enough, Bing called. I was nervous as a cat when I picked up the phone but he was very friendly. I told him the two-hour program would be composed of skits and music and he'd be the host. He asked about the writing, and I told him we had some "great writers" involved and he said he wanted to see a script in advance (frankly, I hadn't even thought about the writing part and we didn't have any writers). Trying to make it an afterthought I casually said, "Oh, by the way, it would be broadcast locally on KMPX." He said that would be fine and agreed to do it.

I couldn't believe it. I gathered my team around and told them the news. Bing Crosby was going to do our program! Then the reality set in. Somehow my staff of 11 was going to have to pull off a major two hour broadcast with Bing and other entertainers, plus skits and music. Who was going to write the show? Where would we get the other performers? Who was going to provide the music?

My head was spinning. Now that we had Bing could we get Bob Hope? How about Dorothy Lamour? Ken Carpenter? John Scott Trotter? We tried the Admiral's letter gambit on Bob Hope's agent. We got a no. We found out later that Bob never heard about it and he told a colleague of mine later that he would have loved to have done the show.

Ken Carpenter couldn't make it, but John Scott Trotter said yes but was so ill he had to cancel a week before the program. When Bob didn't come through we dropped the idea of asking Dorothy Lamour.

FINDING THE REST OF THE CAST

In the meantime, someone gave me the number for Bill Baldwin who had been the Charlie McCarthy/Edgar Bergen show announcer on radio. Bill knew everyone from those early radio days and quickly came to the rescue. He gave me a list of possible candidates: How about Mel Blanc? Jim Jordan (Fibber McGee)? Ella Mae Morse? Les Tremayne? Meredith Willson? Lurene Tuttle? Tyler McVey? Janet Waldo? I couldn't believe my ears! We had hit the mother lode of entertainers from the golden age of radio all on that one phone call.

We had the talent, but with no money how do we get them to San Francisco and where do they stay when they get here? We made calls to local airlines and hotels and in exchange for being named a sponsor, PSA airlines provided the flights and the Holiday Inn provided the rooms, meals and ground transportation.

PREPARING IN EARNEST

Meanwhile, over on Treasure Island, Commander Vercessi was setting aside their largest hanger for the broadcast and trying to find 5000 chairs for the audience. He located the largest American flag on the west coast from an Army base (I believe it was 30x40 feet) and placed a 40mm ack-ack gun on a platform as a backdrop. In addition open parachutes were hung from the ceiling. For the music he enlisted the 12th Naval District band.

Speaking of music, we had guest conductors Meredith Willson and Albert White lined up, but needed arrangements of what was to be played. Thanks to the donated talents of Jack Bethards, a local golden age music buff and fan of the station, he agreed to write the arrangements for most of the songs (including Bing's theme) and was willing to conduct the numbers not done by our guests.

Now all we had left was the writing. Yeah right. Again with no money we had to do this in-house. I had never written a radio show but I was willing to give it a shot. My afternoon announcer, Jim Watt, said he'd lend a hand. We listened to some of the original *Command Performances* and some of Bing's Kraft and Philco shows for ideas. One of Bing's shows from 1949 when Fred Astaire guested had promise and we lifted a bit of the banter between Bing and Fred and re-purposed it to work as the intro for Bing and Bill Baldwin.

Fibber McGee had always worked with his wife Molly but she had passed away so we had to figure out a way for him to perform. We came up with the idea that he would be on the telephone talking and Frank Nelson (of Jack Benny fame), would come to the door as the postman. We wrote that one from scratch.

I wrote the sketch between Private Sad Sack (Mel Blanc) and straight man Bing.

We crossed our fingers and sent off the script to Bing and waited. Finally the parcel arrived back. We had visions of seeing major rewrites ahead, or worse yet, maybe he'd say this was just too amateurish and tell us he was backing out. Instead we saw two small changes in pencil. We were elated. By this time many of the cast members had also submitted sketches of their own either from their original shows or had something specially written. We were on our way.

When we reached out to Armed Forces Radio they agreed to broadcast the program around the world.

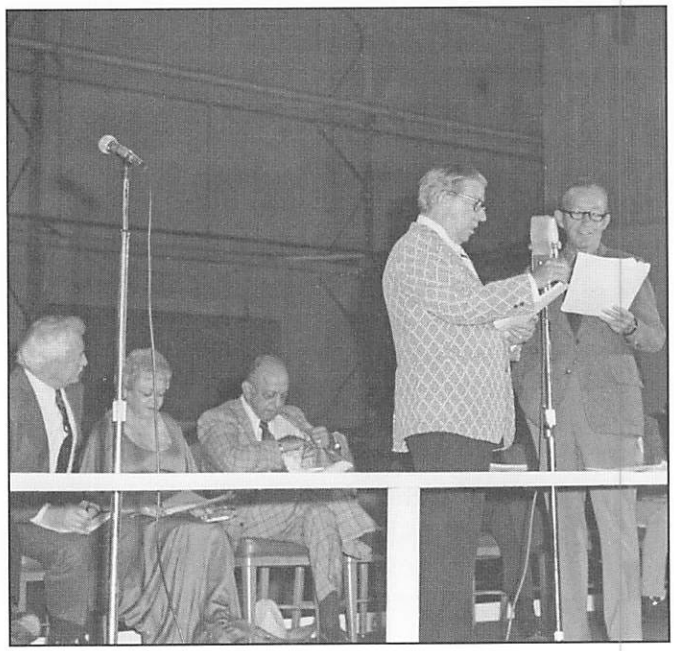
THE BIG DAY ARRIVES

The base sent out a Navy car to pick Bing up at his home. We all waited anxiously backstage for his arrival. He sauntered in nonchalantly about 90 minutes before airtime. We sat around a big table and the rehearsal unfolded calmly and smoothly.

The broadcast itself was a whirl of excitement but came off without a hitch. When Bing was introduced he received a standing ovation from the 5000 that were there. I always thought that it was at that moment he realized how much he was still loved and made a decision to do more live performances beyond what he had been doing with small television audiences for so long. I'd like to believe it paved the way for his 50th Anniversary concert series.

He sang two songs that night, "That's What Life is All About" and "Send in the Clowns." Both were a

delight to hear. I also still recall listening to Bing and Mel read my lines and the audience roar with laughter. What a thrill that was (later, Bing's agent called and asked if he could use it in an upcoming show and, of course, I said yes).



Bill Baldwin and Bing at the microphone with (l to r) Les Tremayne (The Falcon, The First Nighter), Alice Reinheart (Life Can Be Beautiful) and Mel Blanc in the background

When the broadcast ended the Admiral invited us all to a cocktail party at the Officer's Club. Bing was beaming. I was later told by George Vercessi that the navy driver said Bing hardly said a word on the way there but he couldn't stop talking about the show on the way home.

All in all a tremendous evening. It also opened the door for Bing to come visit our station on several occasions. One of those times he told me he'd do a similar show as long as it was for charity. In 1977 Bill Baldwin told me that a Denver hospital was looking for a way to raise funds for a children's wing and I called Bing and asked if he would be interested. He said yes and to call him when he returned from England where he was going to record his Christmas show.

The week he was due back I called and his butler. Mr. Fisher, answered and said Bing had continued on to Spain to play golf and would be back the following week…

I have wonderful memories about that October evening and how that little station of ours managed to pull off that incredible broadcast thanks to a man named Bing Crosby.

John Jensen

Federal Way, WA

(Editor: Our thanks to John for sharing this lovely story with us and as he says, it could well have been one of the factors in bringing Bing back to the concert stage. An excerpt of the broadcast can be seen at KMPXradio.com and this was also shown at the Leeds meeting in October.)

Howard Crosby at Shannon

Pat Flynn, writing in The Clare Herald on June 28, reported on an unusual Crosby performance.

Passengers at Shannon enjoyed an impromptu musical performance last night (Thursday) from the nephew of one of the most greatest stars to ever to pass through the airport.

Howard Crosby performed in the transit lounge at Shannon 43 years after his uncle Bing passed through the airport's doors for the final time.

The second generation Crosby delighted hundreds of passengers as he stepped in the footsteps of his famous uncle. The younger Crosby was in Shannon to preview a photographic exhibition currently being installed at the airport and which will open next month.

The 'wall of fame' will feature the famous international personalities from the worlds of screen, politics and sport who passed through Shannon from the 1950s right up to the modern day.

Included in the exhibition will be a photograph of Bing Crosby himself as he signed the airport guest book back in 1965.

Crosby had a little known previous connection with Co Clare as one of his classics, 'Christmas Candles', was penned by Co Clare songwriter and Clare FM broadcaster the late Vincent O'Dea.

The photographic exhibition will include photos of every US President from John F. Kennedy who transited the airport, either before, during or after their Presidency.

Other international leaders of church and state expected to feature are Pope John Paul II, the Dalai Lama, former South African President Nelson Mandela and even Russian President Boris Yeltsin before his election to the high office and his famous 'no show' visit of 1994 when he failed to disembark the aircraft.

Among the long list of stars of screen and stage who were also photographed at Shannon and who will form part of the exhibition are Marilyn Monroe, Bob Hope, Gene Kelly, Marlon Brando, Charlie Chaplin, Richard Harris, Richard Burton, Mick Jagger and Bruce Springsteen.

Speaking last night, Howard Crosby, whose family roots have been traced right back to Schull, Cork, described Shannon as the 'best and biggest little airport in the world'.

"Shannon has always and still is a great international crossroads and has a special place in the hearts of all Irish Americans. I am proud to count myself one of them. I was delighted to be able to sing here. It's a special place indeed," he said.

"Looking at these photographs, it's almost

staggering to see the famous faces who came through this airport over the years. The good people here at Shannon have an amazing story to tell, amazing history.

Crosby, who performs regularly across the US and in Britain, delighted the appreciative audience with a collection of jazz, pop, Broadway and Irish ballads in the 20 minute performance.

Josh Ryan from New Jersey gave the US crooner the thumbs up."Singing definitely runs in the family. This was a special moment from our trip. The photographs are also amazing and I can't wait to come back and see the finished article," he said.

Pat Flynn

(Editor: And Howard was back in the Irish Press in September.)

THE nephew of legendary crooner Bing Crosby has said the singer was always "enormously proud" of his Irish roots.

Howard Crosby was speaking ahead of a concert in which he was performing in honour of the bi-centenary of the founder of St Vincent de Paul, Frederic Ozanam.

"The Irish were second-class citizens in America for the better part of 100 years," he said. "But when Bing Crosby openly acknowledged and celebrated his Irish ancestry . . . it went from being something you might have been ashamed of, to something that was cool."

Howard and Mary Byrne

The charity concert was held last night in the National Concert Hall.

Also singing was 'X Factor' contestant Mary Byrne. In 1995, Mary was struggling with her finances and received help from the charity. "I always said if I could give back a little I would," she said.

Fiona Ellis, *Irish Independent*, 09 September 2013

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series of CDs remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $18.00 US each which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $18.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £11 each.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has a supply of the book "Alternate Bing Crosby" by Colin Pugh which was published in 1988. Running to 159 pages, it gives details of the many alternate takes Bing made. If you would like a copy, send £3.50 to Michael Crampton. Europe and Ireland members should send £4.50. There are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances and Michael is offering these at the hugely discounted price of only £5.99 including postage. Also Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal figure.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD and video. Festival Films has recently re-released "On the Road with Bing and Bob" with 3 added films and they have a new DVD called "Golf Mania".

Mike Kaptanis, 64 Kingsley Drive Yonkers, NY 10710. (Tel. 914-779-9728, e-mail: mmgkaptan@aol.com)

Member Mike Kaptanis has 8 reel to reel tapes of rare *Kraft Music Hall* excerpts from Eddie Rice that span the years 1937-1940. Dozens and dozens of Crosby vocals and show excerpts. Mike wishes to donate these reels to the ICC, so if there is any member who would like to add this rare material to their collection, or could transfer this material from reel to reel to CD so that more members can enjoy them, contact Mike direct. It is suggested that postage costs are reimbursed to Mike at a minimum.

Dave Odell, Sunrise Village Apartment 210, 5430-37 A

Avenue, Wetaskiwin, Alberta T9A-3A8, Canada (tel: [780] 352-9105)

Dave is looking for the following tracks on CD:
The tracks from the *Thoroughly Modern Bing* LP (on CD as Laserlight CD "Bing Crosby – A Visit to the Movies" or Pickwick CD "Bing Crosby at His Best)
Fancy Meeting You Here (issued on the Bluebird CD "Fancy Meeting You Here")

Oxford University Press is pleased to announce that:
Late Life Jazz: The Life and Career of Rosemary Clooney by Ken Crossland and Malcolm Macfarlane continues to be available through all good bookshops and from Amazon, or direct from Oxford University Press at: http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199798575.do
Prices: $23.96 (Amazon USA), $26.84 (Amazon USA – Kindle), Can$29.95, £18.99 (UK), £17.09 (UK - Kindle)

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: abcsoc@dodo.com)

The Society has been running since 1977 having originally been formed by the late Bob Machliss. Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights.

The film night for April 15 featured *Road to Singapore* and the Deanna Durbin movie *Something in the Wind* (1947). In June, the film *Dixie* was the headline attraction with support in the form of Bing's appearance on Perry Como's TV show in 1960 and Ed Murrow's *Person to Person* programme. On August 19, *Double or Nothing* was shown together with the Mack Sennett short *I Surrender Dear* and *Treasures from the Vaults*, a compilation of rare clips of MGM artists such as Judy Garland and Lena Horne. The film night on October 21 had *Emperor Waltz* as the main attraction with "Wayne & Shuster Take an Affectionate Look at Bing Crosby and Bob Hope" in support. The final film night of the year will take place on December 2. The venue is the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet sites:

www.BingCrosby.com

This comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and has recently been revamped. The audio and video vaults, which contain much rare material, have now been reinstated after a brief absence.

Bing Crosby on Facebook

This also comes under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing's Facebook page is at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Daily entries are made and the number of people who have "liked" the site has now risen to over 127,000. It was 68,000 a year ago. Incredible! Every daily entry is usually 'liked' by hundreds of people as well and there are many comments. Amazing! The most popular city where "likes" originate is Los Angeles and the main age group liking the site is 18 to 34.

Bing Crosby on Twitter

See www.twitter.com/Bingconstantly for this site which appeared earlier in the year. Lots of useful tweets. It has 1750 followers at present.
@Bing_Crosby is still the place to go for Bing Crosby Inc. There are 1640 followers as we go to press.

YouTube

There are many Bing items on YouTube. Bing Crosby Enterprises has its own channel at YouTube with many Bing videos in evidence. Go to:

http://www.youtube.com/user/BingCrosbyEnterprise

BING magazine

This site contains a considerable amount of reference material and Lionel Pairpoint's marvellous radio book, Frans van der Kolff's incredible "Songography", Keith Parkinson's magnificent "The A-Z of Bing's Movies" and Malcolm Macfarlane's "Bing Crosby – Day by Day" can be accessed. See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

A Bing Crosby Discography

Maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this excellent site can be found at:

http://tinyurl.com/BingCrosbyDiscography

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at:
http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/
Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker. If you have any Bing news please consider making an entry on the site and if there are any Crosby matters you want to discuss, this is an ideal place to do so.

Jon Oye's Blog

ICC stalwart Jon has his own first-class blog with several pages about Bing showing many rare items from his collection. Go to: http://derbingle.blogspot.com/

The Bing Crosby News Archive

David Lobosco runs this blog which has news and many stories about Bing at http://bingfan03.blogspot.co.uk/

Tony Meade's blog

Tony has an interesting and varied site at http://bingsphotos.blogspot.co.uk/

John Marshall's "A Night at the Movies"

is an excellent PowerPoint presentation covering all of Bing's films which is well worth watching. It can be downloaded at the following address. Be patient as it takes some minutes to download.

http://archive.org/download/BingANightPOWERPOINT/BingANight.ppt

Books 'n' Bing

Late Life Jazz: The Life and Career of Rosemary Clooney by Ken Crossland and Malcolm Macfarlane, Published by Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-979857-5. $23.96 (Amazon USA), $26.84 (Amazon USA – Kindle),

Can$29.95, £18.99 (UK), £17.09 (UK - Kindle) 323pp inc. appendices + foreword, 31 photographs.

Keith Parkinson looks at the Crosby content in this new book.

Any book about the life of Rosemary Clooney has to include several references to Bing Crosby. He entered her professional life just as her hit parade success was entering its peak years and she was there almost at the end of his life. The two singers first worked together when a tongue-tied Clooney was about to guest on Bing's Chesterfield Show recorded on 26th May 1952. That meeting occurs on page 41 of the book and Bing re-appears in the narrative until 10th October 1977 when Crosby and Clooney duet together on stage in Brighton, four days prior to Bing's death. During the quarter of a century when their careers crossed they appeared together on radio, film, television, record and stage. Only Bob Hope could top that.

I first became aware of Rosemary Clooney the hit recorder in the early 1950s. The pure pop recordings emanating from Columbia Records in the States had started to impact on Bing's presence on the best selling records lists. Mitch Miller produced Clooney's records and working with the likes of Frankie Laine, Guy Mitchell and Johnnie Ray his hit arrangements may not have pleased the music critics but they certainly shifted a lot of shellac. Clooney never rated her pop song career highly but the final chapters of the book find her happily singing the type of songs she enjoyed singing under a career revival with Concord Records.

Rosemary and Bing in *White Christmas*.

Her link with Bing made me want to learn more about her life and I bought a copy of her autobiography "This for Remembrance" shortly after it was published in 1977. It was a bland memoir. When the television movie "Rosie: The Rosemary Clooney Story" was shown in the UK in the mid-eighties I set up my video recorder with the intention of adding it to my video library. I viewed it once and then erased it. In 1999 a second autobiography appeared: "Girl Singer". There were passing references to Bing but it had no more depth than her first memoir. That there was more to the lady than she cared to share in her autobiographies was apparent when Peter Levinson's book "September in the Rain" was published in 2005. This was a biography about Nelson Riddle and although Clooney declined to be interviewed for the book it provided an insight into her wilderness years of the 1960s. Bing was not involved with Rosemary much during that decade but a Clooney biographical gap was filled.

And then "Late Life Jazz" was published in the late summer of 2013. The current editor and previous editor of this magazine had worked together on a book detailing the life and career of Perry Como. That in itself was an incentive to buy the Rosemary Clooney biography. They interviewed those who knew the lady. On the family side, Rosemary's two daughters and her brother give an insight into the sort of person she was to live with. From a professional point of view Michael Feinstein provided a fascinating portrait of the singer he knew well throughout part two of her singing career: The end result is a book that balances the private life of Clooney with the side the public saw and heard. Both facets reveal a complex person. At the end of the book you feel as though you know why she was the woman she was.

Rosemary Clooney's work with Bing is investigated in some detail. You need to read the book to understand why the two of them worked so well together. Or not together, as a most intriguing section of the book revealed. Michael Feinstein told the authors that the 1964 album "That Travelin' Two-Beat" had Rosemary filling in the gaps between Bing's vocals at a later recording date. Remember the revelations when the two Sinatra duet albums for Capitol emerged nearly thirty years later. They weren't all that ground breaking after all. Naturally I had to play my LP just to find out if I could detect the joins.

No doubt you'll be watching Crosby and Clooney in the film *White Christmas* sometime during the next few weeks. I think you'll enjoy the film just a little bit more if you buy "Late Life Jazz" and read about the production of that movie.

Keith Parkinson

Ava Gardner: The Secret Conversations

by Peter Evans and Ava Gardner. Published by Simon & Schuster, print ISBN-10: 1451627696, ISBN-13: 978-1451627695, 304pp. hardcover. $18.70

This new tome is not really a Bing book but our man does crop up briefly on page 46.

Sometimes when Mama went in to Smithfield to do the big grocery shop on a Saturday, Virginia and I would go to the movies. She wasn't allowed to sit downstairs, that was whites only, so I was the only little white thing, a white blond child, up in the balcony with the blacks. I remember seeing one movie with Bing Crosby and Marion Davies. You'll have to check what it was called and what year that was. (Going Hollywood, 1933). I must have been ten or eleven years old. Virginia and I came home and acted out the whole thing; one time I'd be Davies and she would be Crosby, then we'd switch around.

Martin McQuade has spotted a number of fairly recent books which touch on Bing and he gives us details.

Bill Veeck: Baseball's Greatest Maverick by Paul Dickson (Walker Publishing Co: 2012) chronicles the life of the baseball club owner and sportsman/showman Bill Veeck. Veeck was always vying to gain control of teams against formidable competition. In 1956 Veeck aimed his sights on The Detroit Tigers with the help of, among others, Clark Gable, but was outsmarted by a consortium including Bing Crosby and headed by Fred Knorr of Knorr Broadcasting and radio and TV executive John Fetzer. They got The Tigers and Briggs stadium for a record $ 5.5 million dollars, nearly one million higher than any other previous transaction in history. Veeck tried to raise the ante but his bid was disallowed. The Tigers' owner Spike Briggs gained the control he wanted, and an "announcement declared that sale meant the Tigers would remain a 'dignified' operation: 'no midgets, no farm nights, no roving musicians, nothing to distract the keen interest of the tie and jacket folk in the audience.' To some, dignity also meant keeping the team safe from racial integration."

Clemente by David Maraniss (Simon and Schuster; 2006) recounts the life of the champion batter for The Pittsburg Pirates and includes an anecdote of interest. In 1952 Bing scouted identical twins Johnny and Eddie O'Brien for the team. The O'Brien's were known as the Gold Dust Twins and had led the Seattle University Chieftains to the NCAA basketball tournament in 1952 before being recommended to club owner Branch Rickey by Bing Crosby, who was vice president of the Pirates Board of Directors. On stationery with a Bing Crosby/Hollywood logo, the crooner wrote Rickey: 'I think you'll agree that they are colorful performers and one boy has decidedly good form and a hook slide.'"

Battleship by Dorothy Ours (St. Martin's Press; 2013) tells of the first American racer to win England's revered Grand National steeplechase. Battleship was owned by Marion DuPont Scott. When Marion announced in 1938 that her horse would retire to stud, her husband, actor Randolph Scott thought otherwise. His studio, Paramount, was producing a racetrack movie, *Sing You Sinners* with Bing. "The director [Wesley Ruggles] wondered could Scott get Battleship to appear, portraying Uncle Gus," the beloved horse who wins the climactic race. Marion objected. "The role went to Bing Crosby's and Lindsay Howard's colt Ligaroti, who already lived nearby and would gain fame that summer in a match race with Seabiscuit. Crosby, a part owner of Southern California's Del Mar Racetrack, believed in horseracing as an entertainment business and was happy to drum up publicity. But Marion was thinking only of what would be good for Battleship."

The Soundtrack of My Life (Simon and Schuster; 2013) is the autobiography of recording impresario Clive Davis. In one passage he recalls a seminal event in his musical upbringing.

"Because Sinatra was so adored by his audience of female bobby-soxers, I remember quixotically supporting Bing Crosby against him in the musical debates of the day. It seemed as if you had to take a side, and apart from his considerable talent, I liked Crosby because he was an underdog. Of course, as my ear grew more sophisticated, I came to realize how truly incredible a singer Sinatra was, deservedly honored as the master pop vocalist of his age." Strange that an underdog is the one with the far greater contemporary box office totals, record sales, and radio ratings. Anyway, Davis admits that as he became an adult, his "tastes remained the conventional adult tastes of that era: Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Dinah Shore, Kay Starr, Broadway Theater albums – nothing out of the ordinary that would predict a career in the music industry, even as a fantasy or an 'if only' desire." He later speaks of his fondness for Jamie Fox. "He's been an outstanding performing regular at my Grammy party...and though it's little known, he's only one of four artists (Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, and Barbra Streisand being the others) who have won an Oscar in an acting category and scored a number–one album."

In *My Way: Paul Anka* the entertainer, with co-author David Dalton, covers his long friendship with Frank Sinatra (St. Martin's Press; 2013). An infamous event receives one more once–over.

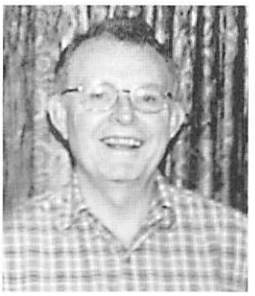
"In 1961 Frank spent a lot of time and money creating a compound specifically for JFK, building new cottages, putting in new phones, buying new furniture, installing a fancy specially built bed above which hung Frank's little in-joke: JOHN F. KENNEDY SLEPT HERE...the walls were covered with photos of Frank, Jack and Peter Lawford. Frank was therefore utterly humiliated when in the spring of 1962, JFK, on a visit to California, ignored Frank's sumptuous quarters Frank

had built for him in Palm Springs and had hoped would become the Western White House. Instead, JFK chose to stay at Bing Crosby's house, which threw Frank into a rage. He began smashing pictures of the Kennedys and took a sledge hammer to the heliport he'd built for JFK to land on."

Anka, an eyewitness to the heyday of the Rat Pack, makes this observation regarding the formative years of two charter members. "It may seem odd, but Frank and Dean at one point were doing the Bing Crosby thing along with the whole look, the hat and the pipe and all that."

Martin McQuade

Celluloid Crosby



Carmela Amari drew our attention to an anniversary concerning one of Bing's earlier films and Keith Parkinson now takes a look at it.

The Christmas of eighty years ago was "celebrated" whilst the effects of the Great Depression were making their presence felt in many families. Hollywood tackled the issue by providing escapist entertainment for exhibition in the burgeoning number of super cinemas which began to appear in major towns and cities. These offered a luxury environment for many. The cost of heating even a modest home was sometimes outside the household budget during the cold winter months. The cinemas were warm and offered the bonus of carpeting and luxury seating.

On December 23rd, 1933, residents of New York could indulge in some pre-Christmas cosseting if they went to one of the downtown movie palaces. Musical comedies provided a means to forget the realities of life for a couple of hours and in that pre-Christmas week in 1933 there were three on offer. The biggest luxury cinema in the U.S.A. was Radio City Music Hall, which seated in excess of 5,000 ticket buyers. The film on offer there was *Flying Down to Rio* with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. In competition was Eddie Cantor's latest offering, *Roman Scandals.* Also opening that day at two New York cinemas, the Capitol and Loew's Metropolitan, was *Going Hollywood*

That film owed its existence to William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper magnate. He spared no expense in bringing his mistress, Marion Davies, to the notice of the nation's moviegoers. He had met her around 1917 and formed Cosmopolitan Pictures for the sole purpose of promoting her films. She had appeared in around thirty silent films most of which had plots which required her to play innocent, virginal juveniles. That was at the behest of Hearst who was unconcerned about their poor performance at the box-office. He believed his wealth would eventually bring his mistress the fame that was her due. Then a problem arose with the coming of sound. Davies had a stutter which resulted in the parts she played requiring little dialogue and short scenes. The fact that she had a film career which eventually spanned twenty years was down to Hearst's newspaper fortune and his alliance with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. That was forged when Louis B. Mayer discovered the benefit of the free publicity which the Hearst press would provide. No Cosmopolitan film ever rated a bad review in a Hearst paper. That would prove to be the case with *Going Hollywood.* Hearst publicity credited Miss Davies with thinking up the film's title.

Going Hollywood was Bing's first film outside his contract with Paramount Pictures. He had made three feature films for that studio. None had resulted in a stampede by ticket buyers. It would take a studio loan out to start him on the road to major movie stardom. That was about to happen. Under the deal with M-G-M / Cosmopolitan Pictures, Clark Gable was borrowed by Paramount to make *No Man of Her Own* and Bing signed up for *Going Hollywood* on August 15th, 1933. Lennie Hayton, Bing's musical director from radio, was contracted to perform a similar task for the film shortly afterwards.

The film's cast assembled at San Simeon, Hearst's Californian castle, towards the end of August for a week's rehearsal. When filming proper got underway Hearst's Cosmopolitan Studio and two of M-G-M's sound stages were utilised for interior filming with director Raoul Walsh's Encino ranch being used for all outdoor locations. Filming proceeded at a leisurely pace. There were several reasons why filming stretched to 47 days. Marion Davies was briefly hospitalised in September. When she was on set she took one hour "tea breaks". Third billed Fifi D'Orsay said that she acted as look-out in case Hearst put in an appearance when Davies was imbibing. It seems unlikely that Hearst was unaware of the drinking habits of his mistress yet throughout her time with him she attempted to delude him into thinking she was teetotal. Parties were held on set during filming and director Raoul Walsh was quite amenable to losing shooting time whilst these went on. The party held to celebrate the end of filming resulted in a vocal tribute from Bing to Walsh. Crosby sang "Rollickin' Rockaway Raoul" to a piano accompaniment. Bing's spoken interlude during the song neatly sums up what went on during those 47 shooting days. He narrates: "We'll pop over to the Davies bungalow and maybe she'll come up with a drink." The song ends with the line "M-G-M can go

screw" which confirms that it was fun and games at the expense of producing film footage. Bing was quiet relaxed about the extended shooting schedule.

Brother Everett had negotiated Bing's services to Cosmopolitan Pictures at the rate of $2,000 per week in addition to his fixed contract fee. When the accountants had completed their calculations M-G-M's operating report showed a loss of $269,000. This was against above the line costs of $914,000 inflated by publicity and distribution charges.

The songs by Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown which were assigned to Bing provided him with the strongest half dozen vocals in his films to date. Five of those cannot really be regarded as standards although they highlighted Bing at his most appealing and passionate to date. They were "Our Big Love Scene", "After Sundown", "Beautiful Girl", "We'll Make Hay While the Sun Shines" and the film's title song. The sixth Freed-Brown song became their entry into the Great American Songbook. It was "Temptation" and it was not written specifically for the film. In a 1974 interview Freed said the song had been composed before the film was proposed but that it slotted neatly into the film. It was used in the sequence where Bing is seen drinking tequila in a Tijuana bar.

Film critics initially regarded the film as a Marion Davies picture. A January, 1934 article headline in the Los Angeles Evening Herald Express read: "Music written especially for Marion Davies new starring picture." Following a press preview mid-December, 1933, Jerry Hoffman wrote in the Los Angeles Examiner: "One of the many reasons Marion Davies has not only held her following among fans, but constantly added to it, is the varied type of vehicles in which she is seen". Hearst owned the L.A. Examiner. He also 'owned' Louella Parsons in that she was the main syndicated showbusiness reporter for his newspapers. When she got round to writing about *Going Hollywood* she did find space to make a prediction about Bing when she forecast that the film would make him more popular than ever. *Going Hollywood* resulted in Bing's first appearance in the box-office top ten. There is no doubt that the film was also partly responsible for Bing being placed at the top of the popular singer category in a nationwide poll conducted early in 1934 by the New York World Telegram.

Viewers in the UK had to wait until the May of 1934 to see *Going Hollywood* The review by Malcolm Phillips for "Picturegoer" must be one of the coolest assessments ever awarded to a Crosby picture. He wrote: "Through it all Crosby croons, apparently interminably. There are, I believe, some hardy people who cannot only endure, but actually enjoy it. I am not one of them." Those hardy people are around to celebrate the recent release of the film on DVD. M-G-M have used clips of Bing singing "Going Hollywood" and "Temptation" in their compilation films *That's Entertainment* (1974) and *That's Entertainment Part Two* (1976) respectively. The "Going Hollywood" extract has found itself an extended life to take it up to and beyond the hundredth anniversary of *Going Hollywood.* It is screened regularly at the Egyptian Cinema on Hollywood Boulevard. That cinema is operated by the American Cinematheque where a fifty minute compilation called *Forever Hollywood,* made in 1999, ends with Bing singing the title song he put on celluloid and shellac eighty years ago.

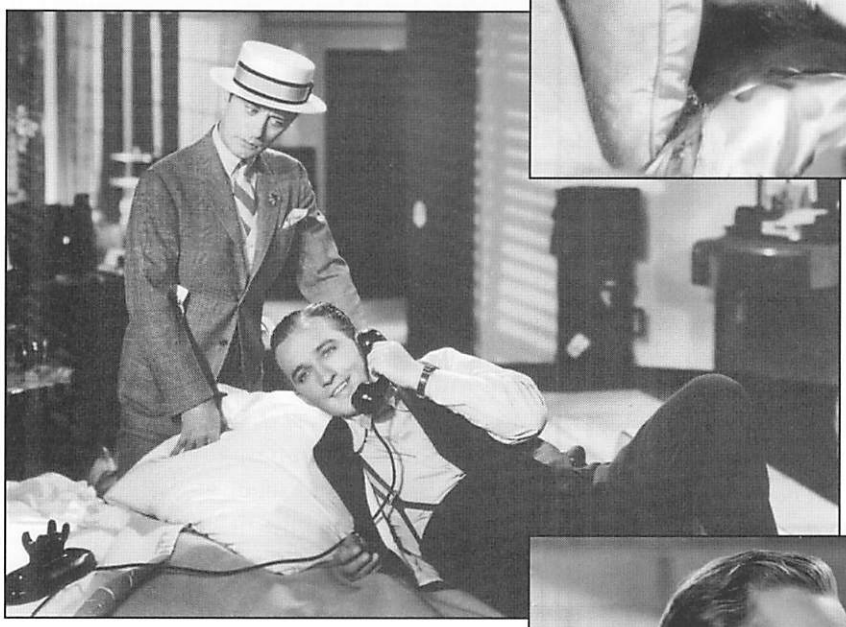
Keith Parkinson k.parkinson1941@btinternet.com

Bingerama

Martin McQuade tells us about Bing's involvement in something we don't usually associate with him – Cinerama!

The spring 2010 issue of *Bing (#154)* featured my report on the efforts of film preservationists Randy Gitsch and David Strohmaier to salvage *Cinerama's Russian Adventure*, one of the final movies made in the three–strip process which had initially endeared Cinerama to audiences. Mr. Strohmaier had recently unearthed the original Russian–made footage (actually made in a counterpart format, Kinopanorama) in a trailer in Los Angeles. Alas, he had not found the opening prologue in which Bing appears, strumming a balalaika and crooning a few bars of a Russian melody as he introduces this glorified travelogue of The Soviet Union. Since then, the two Cinerama crusaders succeeded in locating the lost three minute segment. At long last it was included in a special screening held during *Widescreen Weekend Program* at The Pictureville Cinema in Bradford, England on April 27, 2012, at which time Mr. Gitsch offered these remarks.

Bing introduces the film



Stills from *Going Hollywood*.

"RUSSIAN ADVENTURE" represents a surprising merger of Cinerama's past with its immediate future. Released in 1966, the picture is montage [comprised of] compatible 3-panel Kinopanorama footage from features and shorts shot between 1958 and 1963. It also features a shot of an original Cinerama 3-strip camera as "star", albeit in a short prologue of "Der Bingle", Bing Crosby introducing the Kinopanorama footage that follows.

And this scene was apparently shot rather quickly. There's a film crew cable visible on the floor of his "office" set. Crosby with his mellifluous voice serves quite nicely as a narrator and he seems to do well pronouncing a dozen difficult Russian first and last names. It's interesting to see Bing tagged onto this picture, as in just a few short years, he, through his Bing Crosby Productions company, would become Cinerama Releasing's most bankable independent producer, responsible for "Willard", "Ben", the "Walking Tall" films, and several others, all of which had huge box office returns. So here he is, tagged onto the front of the Russian footage somewhat in the same way that Raymond Burr was spliced onto the Japanese "Gojira", to make "Godzilla, King of the Monsters".

Now...I'll be careful to not slip any spoilers, in case some of you haven't yet seen the film, but you're going to see a scene with a whale. When you do, this film becomes "Mondo Cane" theater fodder, and by that I mean "sensational", a "shockumentary". And this scene alone possibly sealed the fate of the film's somewhat limited 1966 U.S. release. Such shock wasn't seen on American theater screens in the '60's, or if it was, it was relegated to the art house circuit. Cinerama's primary audience base, especially after "How the West Was Won" and "The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm" was family...not art-house.

Mr. Strohmaier sent me a note about the remastered *Adventure*. "We were not able to use the original negatives but only a dupe negative which had many problems and color problems. We made it look as good as we could. "One may glimpse a sample by visiting: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRYg4k-gTUY

Russian Adventure once again was screened at The Cinerama Dome in Hollywood on Sept. 30, 2012 as part of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of Cinerama. On that day there was also a screening of *Windjammer,* a 1958 documentary saga of a Norwegian sailing ship and its crew, which was filmed in a related process, Cinemiricle. One of the principal cameramen of Windjammer was Bob Gaffney, a pioneer in underwater and aerial cinematography. Gaffney was Stanley Kubrick's assistant cameraman on *2001: a Space Odyssey* and urged the director to film it in three–strip Cinerama. That plan was abandoned due to the cost. A few years later, circa 1971, Gaffney filmed one of Bing's Minute Maid commercials. Here is a link to Bing intently watching Gaffney at work: http://www.in70mm.com/news/2006/gaffney/gallery.htm

Another film shown during the Dome series was *How The West Was Won*. The spring 2012 issue of *Bing* (#160) contained my article with information on Bing's intimate involvement in the production of that epic, which derived from his album of the same name, which, in turn, had been inspired by a *Life Magazine* series for which Bing had secured the rights. Bing helped to secure some members in the all–star cast and was set to be narrator, a job which went to Spencer Tracy. Further research reveals that the original title was *The Great Western Story and it* was to be produced in tandem with Cinerama and Bing Crosby Productions. Eventually it was produced jointly by M-G-M and Cinerama, with the musical score owned by Bing Crosby Enterprises. The great success of *How The West Was Won* emboldened MGM to finance *2001* with the intention that it be a similarly structured multiple-part story chronicling the conquest of space. In fact, Kubrick and his screenwriter Arthur C, Clarke had a working title for the project, *How The Solar System Was Won.* Perhaps it is no coincidence that the western saga ends in the very same locale where the opening sequence in *2001* takes place: the seemingly extra–terrestrial Monument Valley. In fact, Gaffney shot that prehistoric episode for *2001*. Here is food for thought – and another tantalizing link in Bing's association with 70 mm spectaculars, which would culminate with his investment in the multi-screen ventures such as *The New York Experience.*

Martin McQuade

THE MYTH ABOUT BING'S "WHITE CHRISTMAS"

It is a real pleasure to welcome Wig Wiggins back to our pages with a seasonal feature.

The Myth: So many copies of Bing Crosby's 1942 Decca recording of "White Christmas" were sold that the master became damaged from over use, so Bing had to record it again in 1947.

That's been the so-called official story for more than seven decades. But as a Crosby collector for more years than that, I have never believed it to be true. Although I have no actual proof, I believe there is a much more logical explanation for what really happened.

THE HISTORY

Originally recorded in May 1942, Bing's "White Christmas" rose rapidly in sales throughout 1942 and reached Number One in the American popular charts that year. It was again in the Top Ten for each of the next four holiday seasons. After Bing's re-recording in March 1947, the combined 1942 and 1947 versions went on to become the best-selling single recording in the history of popular music. Their worldwide sales continue to grow

with each passing year, and we will never know the actual totals, because of the lack of accurate sales figures from the pre-computer era.

The Argentinean issue

Decca Records (and its successors MCA and Universal Music) have always jealously guarded their copyright control of Bing's "White Christmas", preventing him from re-recording it for any other company and taking legal action against so-called unauthorized reissues. Under such circumstances, it can only make you wonder how Decca would ever have allowed its original master to deteriorate before taking action to protect and safeguard it.

JACK KAPP'S EXPLANATION

A number of years ago, I made a special trip from Virginia to Florida to meet with pre-eminent American Crosby collector, the late Howard Levine, on behalf of the Jonzo project that had been established to preserve Bing's Decca recording legacy on compact disc.

I knew that Howard Levine had worked directly for Jack Kapp, President of Decca Records, in New York in the 1940's, until Kapp's untimely death in 1949. During my visit, we discussed many questions about Bing's long association with Jack Kapp at both the Brunswick and Decca companies. Among others, I asked Howard if he had any idea as to why Kapp had Bing re-record "White Christmas" in 1947, given that his 1942 version was continuing to sell extremely well all over the world at the time.

Howard Levine told me that he had, indeed, asked Jack Kapp that very same question himself.

Howard said that, in response, Kapp only smiled and replied that it had been done "for safety purposes". There was no mention by Kapp of any "worn out master"!

A DIFFERENT THEORY

Based on this background, I have long thought there might well have been an entirely different reason for Jack Kapp's insistence that Bing re-record "White Christmas" for Decca in 1947. My theory, for what it may be worth, is the following.

During America's involvement in World War II from 1941 to 1945, Bing Crosby was extremely active making countless personal appearances to entertain troops at home and abroad, in addition to his regular radio and film work. And during this process, it became noticeable that Bing's singing voice was becoming deeper and mellower, perhaps the result of overwork. This was especially evident in his *Kraft Music Hall* radio broadcasts, including the manner in which he was singing "White Christmas" each holiday season. These radio performances became different in tone from his 1942 Decca recording.

In considering these developments, I believe that Jack Kapp came to the conclusion that Decca needed a more up-to-date version of Bing's "White Christmas", in order to better match his changing voice and to guarantee continuing sales. And that's exactly what Kapp obtained in March 1947. It may well have been done for "safety purposes", but most likely to "safeguard" commercial sales and, conveniently, just in time for the dawning of the LP and 45 rpm era. Thereafter, when customers went to their music stores for a copy of Bing's "White Christmas", it sounded just like he was singing it on the radio. "Safety", indeed!

OTHER CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

Back in 1935, Jack Kapp had insisted that Bing Crosby record "Silent Night' for Decca. Bing was most reluctant to do so, believing that such a traditional Christmas carol was not appropriate for a popular singer like himself. Kapp eventually prevailed, after agreeing with Bing that all of Bing's royalties for the recording would be donated to charity. And over the next half-dozen years, Bing's "Silent Night" became one of Decca's best-sellers.

Nevertheless, after Bing recorded "White Christmas" for the first time in May 1942, Jack Kapp also had him re-record "Silent Night" just one week later in June. Why? Again, I think it was done to obtain comparable versions of both popular Christmas songs in what I call Bing's "1942 voice", rather than continuing to release "Silent Night" in his earlier and more youthful-sounding "1935 voice".

And, finally, at the studio session in March 1947 which produced the "safety" version of "White Christmas", Kapp also had Bing record "Silent Night" again as well. Why? In my opinion to have both recordings in Bing's "1947 voice" this time. And by the way, there never has been a suggestion that any of the "Silent Night" masters were worn or damaged, even though they were always best-sellers themselves.

In addition, over the years Jack Kapp also had Bing re-record a number of his earlier hit songs for Decca from time-to-time, including "Ol' Man River", "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day", "Just One More Chance", "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams", "Please" and "Stardust". For "safety" purposes, or more likely to keep up with Bing's changing voice?

There's certainly no proof of all of this, but I offer my theory as more probable than the myth of a worn out master requiring Bing to re-record "White Christmas" in 1947. Besides, at that time, I can't believe that there were not still "undamaged" masters in other countries, like Australia and England, if not the United States, which were still available.

I rest my case.

THE 1942 AND 1947 RECORDINGS COMPARED

Beginning in 1947, Bing's original 1942 recording disappeared from the Decca catalog, and it was not officially reissued in the United States until the compact disc era. When I was asked to compile "The Voice of Christmas" CD set for MCA/Universal in 1998 (MCAD2-18840), I insisted on including both Bing's 1942 and 1947 versions for completeness and comparability, and we even added Bing's first, fluffed 1942 take that had never been issued commercially before. On that memorable day, "one take Crosby" had actually required two efforts to get Irving Berlin's masterpiece right. But it certainly was worth it!

The fluffed 1942 take (with thanks to John Newton for providing this)

Personally, I have always preferred Bing's 1942 version of "White Christmas", because I think he was more comfortable with sustaining the higher notes of the melody in 1942 than in 1947. Also more important to my ears, the choral interlude in 1947 has a slightly disagreeable sharpness to it (from an over-miked male voice) that is not present in the smoother and more appealing 1942 one. Give each a close listening, and I think you will see what I mean. While the 1947 recording is, by far, the best known around the world, I do believe that the 1942 version is the better one by a small margin.

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

One final comment. In 2011, Universal Music re-released a group of Bing's hits in its American ICON compact disc series (B0015649). Much to my surprise, they included Bing's 1942 version of "White Christmas" for a change. So after some 70 years, Universal has returned to the original that started it all. Within that pleasant context, I would like to wish one and all a very Merry Christmas and a most Happy New Year. And "may all your Christmases be white"!

Wig Wiggins

Bing and Christmas

Remaining on a seasonal theme, Bing's niece, Carolyn Schneider recalls happy Crosby family yuletide gatherings.

No matter what has been written about Bing Crosby in books by published authors, none of them knew their subject in the way that his family did. Some of these writers never even met Uncle Bing, and yet they professed to know his innermost thoughts, ideas, and opinions of the future.

Often when I make a personal appearance and do a book signing, people will ask me, "what was Bing really like", in reply, I offer this profile of him.

I believe one of Uncle Bing's most outstanding characteristics was his love of family, which was shown over and over again during his lifetime.

After arriving in Hollywood and starting his career we all know that Bing called upon his family, brothers Larry and Everett, as well as his father to help him form and operate Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing Crosby Productions. He continued to embrace family members, although his popularity increased and demands on his time were excessive.

Family members, including nephews and nieces such as myself, had an open invitation to attend all of Uncle Bing's activities, such as: Radio or TV shows, filming at Paramount Studios, his Pro-Am golf tournament and so forth. The welcome mat was out to all of us as well for the use of any vacation property he owned over the years, namely: Pebble Beach, Palm Springs, Rising River, the Elko ranches, and Hayden Lake. Those years were a time when we all felt close and connected, we were family. If Uncle Bing were still here, I truly believe that things would be the same today.

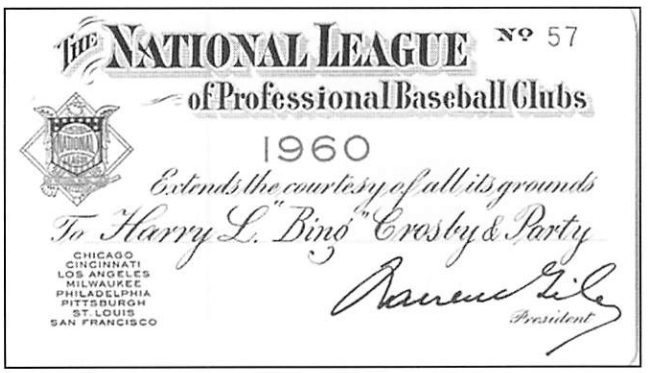
I would say that family dinners were something that Uncle Bing enjoyed the most. When the dining table was

filled with his brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, as well as his wife and children, Bing would fetch his camera to capture the scene.

Many warm memories still linger with me after many years, of Christmas time with Bing, Dixie, and the four boys in their home on Mapleton Dr. in Los Angeles. That custom continued with Uncle Bing, Kathryn, and their children at the Hillsborough house. These times were very similar to the early days of the Crosby's in Spokane, when Bing and my mother were school children. I'm told that their father, (my grandpa), would gather the family around him in the sitting room after dinner every Sunday to share some stories, music, and laughter. It would seem that Bing wanted to repeat those family get-togethers that he enjoyed so much, especially every year at Christmas, and hoped that his children would carry on the tradition.

Carolyn Schneider

The group Christmas photo taken at Hillsborough in 1973 shows Bing in the center, sister Catherine, on his left, then Carolyn, next is Bing's brother, Larry, J.T. Pool (Mary Rose's husband), and Bing's sister Mary Rose. Harry and Nathaniel can be seen in the foreground. On the left of the picture: Kathryn's father, Kathryn's sister and Mrs. Grandstaff. Filling out the rest of the picture are children and grandchildren.



One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue

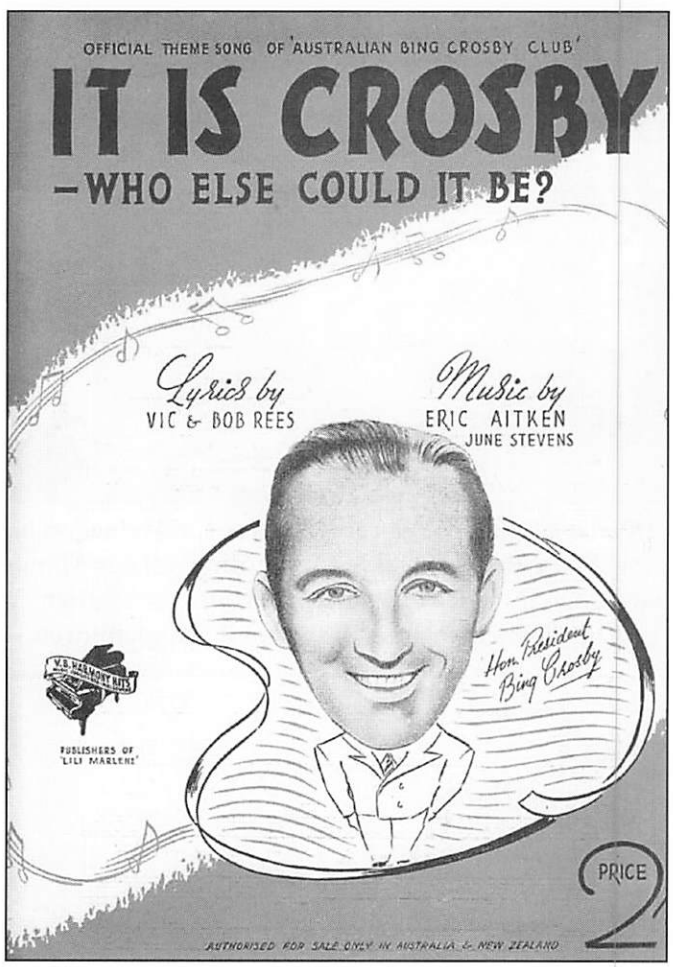
June Turnbull, by email from Briar Hill, Victoria, Australia.

Came across your fan club info on the website.

When I was a little girl of 8, (a long time ago – in the 40's) I wrote a song, which then evolved into becoming the official Bing Crosby theme song of the (then) Bing Crosby Fan Club – in Australia, and I believe, also that of some fan clubs overseas.

I'd composed a catchy tune, played it one day for a musician friend of my Dad's, and he loved it - orchestrated it, and went out and found lyricists – who wrote the words – and in this process this song, "It is Crosby, Who Else Could It Be", came into being.

This was produced on sheet music, and also recorded. But although there was talk of Bing himself recording it, he never did. But I believe he knew of the song, which was very popular on the hit parades in Australia. I received royalty cheques for years afterward, as did my co-writers. Nothing huge – but consistent modest income. Not bad for an 8 year old.



Just a piece of trivia. But wonder if you've ever heard of the song? I read about something called "It's Crosby – Who Else Could It Be" – by Pam Harrigan, on one of the Crosby sites.

My late father (along with my brother, both self-taught highly regarded sound engineers) - pioneered the Australian 33/3rd microgroove recording industry with his label, Spotlight, producing the first ever all-Australian LP recording in the early 50's. Masters now in the National Archives of Sound and Music, Canberra. His records were commercially successful, and are now collector's items.

You are very welcome to re-produce my e-mail in your magazine. Eric Aitken was a frequent visitor to my Dad's studios, lived locally, a friend of Dad's, Dad recording some of his work privately for him - a pianist – can't recall what his actual profession was, being so young when I first met him, and he, then, to me, middle-aged. But he just heard me playing this tune by chance, when he was visiting us one day. And it all went from there. Of course I knew who Bing Crosby was, then. (Who didn't!)

Dad also put on 16mm film shows for our troops – and to raise money for Melbourne's Royal Childrens' Hospital – so I saw MANY Bing Crosby movies and clips during Dad's film shows. Some attended by hundreds of those in uniform – and American troops then billeted in Melbourne, too. But it was of course Eric, and Dad, who progressed this whole "my tune" scenario along, of course – to where it became the official theme song of the Australian Bing Crosby fan club. Me being too young to understand all the "politics" and machinations.

(Editor: I had a nice exchange of emails with June and I sent her an image of the front cover of her song. I have put June in touch with David Currington also.)

Graham Pascoe, by email from Bathurst, NSW, Australia

I don't know how you editors of the magazine do it: find new, interesting information about Bing to publish, and also to re-visit other articles and subjects. Keep up the great work please. What a contrast from The Dick Haymes Society which has had to publish the final edition of its Newsletter because no fresh information on Dick is available.

To keep the international flavour I'll add some Australian perspectives to some of the topics in BING No. 164 in the order in which they appeared.

Bob Crosby performed in Australia in 1960 and hosted a popular television program 'The BP Super Show'. His Aussie Decca 78 rpm record with 'March of

the Bob Cats' and 'Smokey Mary' had been a massive seller. One year later he returned to our screens, starring in another special but this time it was for a different oil company, Mobil which was favourably reviewed by The Sun-Herald in Sydney: 'There is no doubt the old Crosby charm has rubbed off in large patches on brother Bob ...a rare charm and quiet approach'. As host of 'World Championship Golf' Bob appeared again. He was also the featured star on a local vaudeville theatre's 'Hollywood bandbox'. Then in 1966 he hosted a 'Tonight'-type show produced in Sydney and Melbourne each week. Titled 'The Bob Crosby Show', it didn't last long but its failure to get satisfactory ratings was attributed by one writer to poor production rather than Bob Crosby's deficiencies.

Here Come the Waves was released simultaneously in Sydney and Melbourne in July 1945 but critics' opinions were not similar. It was advertised as a 'Bing bang beautiful musical' but Melbourne's evening newspaper *The Herald* was not complimentary: 'While Hollywood continues to produce these musical farces against a services background there'll always be a British film industry ... Bing Crosby is disappointing after his recent successes.' *The Sydney Morning Herald* thought 'In this film Crosby is happy to move, second and carry unanimously a motion of confidence in himself as America's No.1 crooner and he does it with all the mildest of manners.' The movie had long runs in both cities.

Top O' the Morning opened in Melbourne just two days after its New York premiere and *The Herald's* review was favourable but it ran there for only three weeks, which was one week less than *Welcome Stranger* in 1947. In Sydney the SMH described it as 'A mushy dish of synthetic Irish stew ... not even Bing's singing can do much for it'. Its run was the shortest of any of Bing's feature films in the 1940s.

The so-called rivalry between Bing and Frank Sinatra did not get a great deal of media coverage in Australia. Sinatra's recordings with Tommy Dorsey had been released here but throughout the 1940s Bing had dominated the charts with 182 songs reaching the charts including 22 reaching the top position. The figures for Sinatra were 55 and 4. Incidentally, it was interesting to read in Bing's letter to Frank his advice to listen to his critical friends rather than back-slappers. It reminded me of Adolph Zukor's comment in the BBC Radio production *The Bing Crosby Story* to the effect that Bing was 'a very odd individual' because he doesn't like praise ... he'd rather hear criticism.

Cheers and thanks again for another splendid issue of BING

Keith Parkinson, St. Helens, Lancs., UK

If only I'd known you would be in the company of Jimmie Rodgers I would have given you some LPs of his to sign. He's a forgotten vocalist who, like so many, vanished when the Beatles changed the music scene in America. Around the mid-sixties he was involved in a motoring accident and needed a metal plate inserting into his head. It was said that the accident changed his personality - whatever that means. Around ten years or so a couple of CDs were issued containing four of his albums but there was no surrounding publicity. He was also pencilled in to make an appearance at Southport Theatre in the 1990s but a UK tour never materialised. Jimmie ought to be told that I bought a copy of "Kisses Sweeter than Wine" as well as you.

When Marc Matelart next visits London he should know that the Cinema Bookshop on Great Russell Street stopped trading several years ago when the owner retired. If he's looking for a book shop which stocks less familiar film titles he should try the bookshop at the National Film Theatre.

Maureen Solomon, Toluca Lake, California, USA (as seen on the Crosby Fan World site on September 15)

At our 49th Cinecon last week in Hollywood, Pat Boone and Shirley Jones were interviewed after a screening of *April Love*. It was suggested that the song "Do It Yourself" wherein Pat and Shirley and the secondary leads were having a barbeque, was very much like a Bing song. Along the lines of "Sunshine Cake" where they are singing and handling lots of props and tossing things back and forth throughout. Pat and Shirley agreed and they mentioned how Bing always did bits of business while he sang which were always interesting and creative. They were both very familiar and enthused with Bing's ability to further enrich a song or a scene with his unique stylings. A nice Bing moment by two gracious stars who remember and appreciate him to this day.

(Editor: The next letter was sent direct to Michael Crampton.)

Elizabeth Gregory, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, UK

Thank you very much for sending me the CD "Bing in the Hall" and I enclose my cheque for £7.50.

You are right, this CD is a gem and I have really enjoyed listening to it, some of the tracks being quite new to me. I have looked through my previous issues of BING but could not find an insert for this CD, so perhaps I did miss out. Anyway, thank you for the reminder in No. 164. I hope some of the other members will be ordering too.

BING is an excellent magazine, full of interesting articles and useful information, so I'd like to thank you, Malcolm and all the other contributors for all your hard work.

John Newton, by email from Wilmington, Delaware, USA

Some time ago I obtained a 16-inch Universal Pictures synchronous disc of Reel 1 for *King of Jazz*.

I had already had a set of the 12 discs with the entire soundtrack, but went after this particular disc because it was for the French release version of the film. (*King of Jazz* had several "foreign-language" versions produced with the announcements, etc. between numbers in different languages and spoken and appearances by different "masters of ceremonies".) ... Anyway, since I'd never heard of the French release version, and knew that the film studios produced often significantly different foreign versions, I wanted to see if there were any differences with *King of Jazz*.

When I first played the French Reel 1, I was surprised that the film doesn't start like the English language version. ... Bing's singing of "Music Hath Charms", which opens the English language version, is completely missing from the beginning of the film in the French language version. .. The other bits of Bing in Reel 1, "The Lord Delivered Daniel", etc., are certainly still there, but not the usual musical opening.

Carolyn Schneider, by email from Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

My contact person at Levi Strauss and Co. called to tell me that Levi is going to re-issue the Bing Crosby denim tuxedo. These new replicas will be available for sale to the public in the spring of 2014 and distributed to their stores throughout the US...My contact person also told me that while the new BC jacket will appear to be the same as the jackets that were made back in 1951, some slight differences will be noticeable. These new replicas will include the leather label on the inside with Bing's name on it same as the first batch of replicas. *(Editor: Further details soon appeared on the GQ.com web site..)*

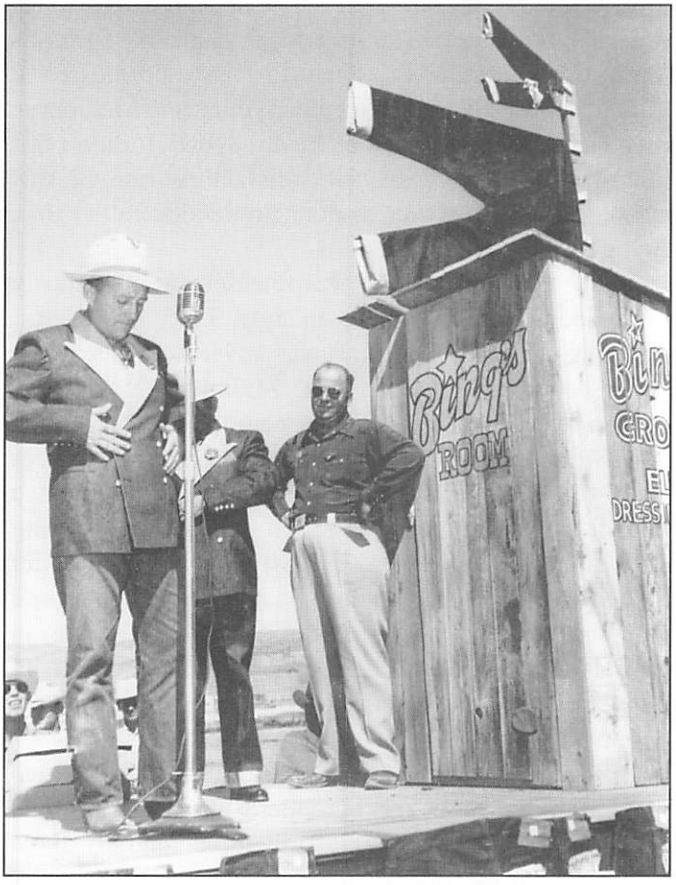
Levi's Vintage Clothing Brings Back The Original "Canadian Tuxedo"

Ever wonder where the term "Canadian Tuxedo" comes from? Well, wonder no more. Crooner Bing Crosby (ask your grandpa, young'uns) was an avid fan of Levi's. He wore the jeans (and matching jacket) on the ranch, on album covers, and just about any place he could. However, one of those places he *couldn't* was a certain Canadian hotel. After hunting with a friend in the Great White North, the story goes, Crosby and his friend wanted to check into a swanky Vancouver hotel for the night. However, they were told that they couldn't be admitted. Why? They were wearing denim.

As Levi's historian Lynn Downey tells it on One Trip Pass:

> *You see, in the 1950s, denim had a very bad reputation, thanks to Marlon Brando, James Dean and all those other malcontents who were upsetting the social order by not conforming to America's postwar obsession with suburbs, picket fences and men in grey flannel suits. Not only that, denim still retained its work wear, laborer origins.*

Luckily for the two of them, a bellhop recognized Bing Crosby and they were allowed to stay the night. However, when he got back home and told the tale, Levi's got word and decided it wouldn't happen again, by giving him something very special.



Trying on the jacket for the first time, June 30, 1951.

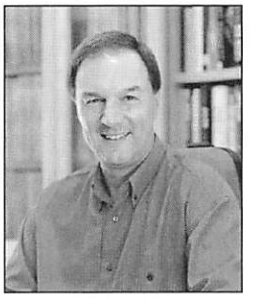
Levi's bestowed Bing Crosby with a denim tuxedo jacket, made from the same denim as the 501, with details like peaked lapels and even a lapel flower made from Levi's red tabs with a lone rivet in the center. Inside the jacket was a special leather patch warning hotel men everywhere to treat the wearer of this special garment with respect. Now, Levi's Vintage Clothing is paying homage to the original "Canadian Tuxedo" for spring 2014.

They've recreated Crosby's denim tux right down to the red tab lapel flower and interior leather patch. However, this time there's a set of matching pants—inverted selvedge lines stand in for formal grosgrain side stripes on the trousers. For hardcore denim nerds and fans of clothing history (or Bing Crosby, for that matter), it's a welcome and knowing nod to the past.

Jian DeLeon

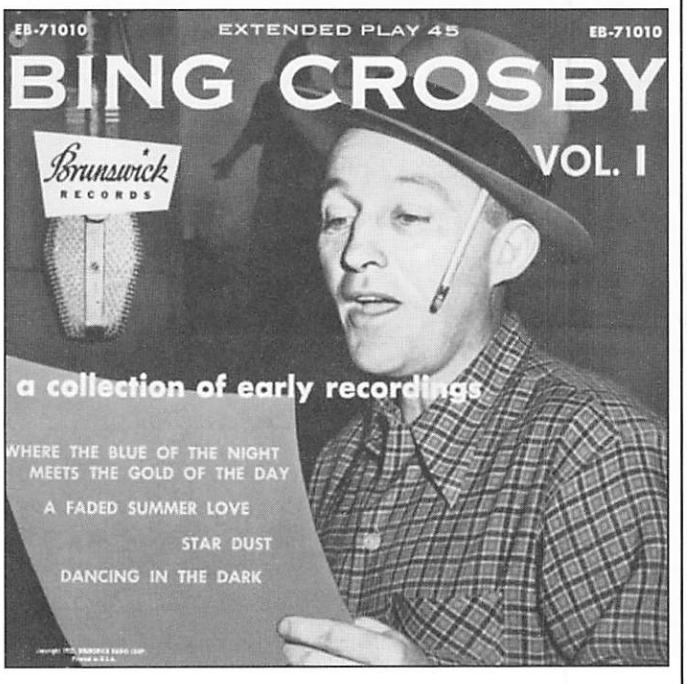
CROSBYANA

Ken Crossland takes a look at all things Bing



It's always nice when the written word provokes an interesting response and I was especially gratified that the first 'at bat' for Crosbyana triggered some follow-on correspondence. You will see elsewhere how a letter from former editor John Bassett has now generated some new research into Bing on 45.

A listing of Bing's UK 45 rpm releases is one thing, but what about the American picture? It's a glaring omission that we do not seem to have, anywhere in the history of the ICC or indeed Club Crosby, a listing of Bing's US 45s. Or at least not one that has been sustained down the years. It's a daunting task but perhaps an interesting challenge for someone in the dark days of winter. Until then, we can at least cherry pick. The 60th anniversary appearance of *Le Bing*, reviewed by my successor in *Keeping Track*, had me scurrying for my EP collection with a vague idea that as well as a UK 10" LP, I also had this rarity on a US double EP. I do, how and when it came my way I have not the slightest idea. More surprising still was the discovery of several other US EPs alongside it, none of which I even knew that I had, let alone how I got them.



Four of them are American Brunswick releases, in two pairs, Bing Crosby Vols 1&2, catalogue numbers EB-71010/1, and then Vols 3&4 numbered EB-71028/9. Anything from the States on microgroove and under the Brunswick name strikes me as something of a rare bird. The two sets house 16 tracks and the titles are immediately familiar, so much so that this bunch of songs seems almost to be joined at the hip. "Where the Blue of the Night", "A Faded Summer Love" and "Stardust" are on Volume 1. Volume 2 has "Out of Nowhere" and "Just One More Chance". The next pair includes "I Found a Million Dollar Baby", "Goodnight Sweetheart", "Sweet and Lovely" and "I Apologize". "Ah", I hear some of you saying, "you mean 'Bing Sings the Early 30s'. 'Deed I do.

It set me wondering why this batch of songs - later expanded to 24 when 12-inch releases replaced 10-inch - always appear together. If you look at other reissues there is no other group of songs (excluding purpose-made albums of course) that travel en masse. Yet these have consistently accompanied each other from the days of 78 rpm albums through 10 and 12" LPs, EPs, and into the world of compact discs, always in a one-or-all, all-for-one aggregation. How so?

Perhaps you are one of the people who will say that the answer is obvious but until recently, I was not part of that exclusive club. But now I know and the answer comes from indirectly via the question "when is a Brunswick not also a Decca record?" (At this point, I need to issue a health warning. The relationship between the Brunswick and Decca labels is a minefield of complexity and misunderstanding. Those who read on do so at their own peril.)

Let's go back to the start. In 1931, the young Bing signed a 6-month deal with Brunswick Records, then owned by Warner Brothers. The contract was soon extended but within a year, Warner's had sold their record operations to the American Record Corporation (ARC) who, seven years later, in 1939, were acquired by the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). Columbia decided to drop Brunswick as a label, thus breaching a condition of the original Warner-ARC sale. As a result, the Brunswick trademark reverted to Warner Bros, who promptly sold it to American Decca, which they part owned. (Still with me? I did warn you.) As part of that latter deal, the rights to recordings made by Brunswick up to December 1931 also went to Decca, but anything after that date stayed with CBS. And therein lies the answer. From signing with Brunswick Records in March 1931 until December of that year, Bing recorded the 24 titles that keep on reappearing. Purely by chance, 24 was just the right number for two 12" LPs-worth of tracks or a 24-track budget CD release. In the early days, it was also nicely divisible into three 8s, thus facilitating one, two or three 10" LP issues. Regardless of how they are badged, all of the microgroove/digital reissues of these 24 songs have originated from American Decca and its successors because they are the only examples of pre-1934 Crosby to which they had the rights.

It may well be that if you are an American reader, you see this as another example of a slow-witted Brit taking forever for the proverbial penny to drop. But just bear in mind, we have another set of complications. We are

accustomed to seeing Brunswick as either an obscure, pre-1931 American label or as the post-1934 British brand used for American Decca recordings. Over here, English Brunswick represents the other side of the original Warner/ARC deal. One side bet in that deal was that British Decca acquired the Brunswick label for the UK market and used it for all the British releases of Bing's American Decca catalogue, including both the March-December 1931 original Brunswicks and the post-1934 Deccas. These 24 'early 30s' recordings are thus the only titles that could have legitimately appeared under a Brunswick banner in both the USA and the UK. And that, I guess, is what makes them unique.

Having thus finally distinguished American Brunswick from English Brunswick, I was congratulating myself on a job well-done when UK member Stan White wrote to me tossing another spanner into the works. Did I know, he asked, how many British releases appeared on British Decca's red classical label instead of the usual black and gold of Brunswick (the cause, apparently being a shortage of black and gold printing material, presumably during the war). Until then, I didn't know of any but Stan points out that "White Christmas" was certainly one and that there were other non-Bing popular releases that turned up in classical colours. Perhaps, suggests Stan, there were others too. Another research project looms.

Linda Crossland joins the search for the missing 78s.

In the meantime, let me close with a short story from my ongoing quest to complete my collection of British Crosby 78s. I am missing 84 still but having added at least 30 to my collection this year, I am progressing. I hoped for more when a dealer at a local record fair told me that he had "2,000 Bings" just looking for a home. "Come to my own fair," he said. I was sceptical but then an invitation to his fair dropped through the letterbox, proudly announcing that 180,000 78s would be on display on a given date in August. I rang him the week before to check that I wouldn't need to go through all 180,000 to find the "2,000 Bings" and he assured me that I wouldn't, that all the Crosby's were together in boxes "although it might take a bit of searching to find the boxes."

I have about 600 78s in total and I have seen collections with ten or twenty times that amount but I have never seen 180,000 78s en masse. It takes some imagining. The best likeness I can give is the film *The Day of the Triffids*, where the invading plant takes root in the garden of a house and spreads. When I arrived at his home, I entered via the garage - records floor to ceiling, covering just about every inch of space. Out of the back of the garage was the rear garden, a long, thin exposure of land extending some 100 yards, filled with tents, sheds and outhouses each one bulging with 78s. It was like a shellac shantytown. The house itself had long since surrendered. Every room was infested, even the bathrooms. The dealer was true to his word - almost. The discs were sorted, just, but there were at least four tents-worth of discs marked "vocals" and somewhere within them resided the boxes of Bings. With the help of my ever faithful wife - not previously known to lay a hand on a 78 leave alone rummage through boxes - we spent two hours in the wilderness. I think we looked at about 1,000 Bings and I am prepared to concede that had we stayed until night fell, we might have found the other 1,000 too. From the 1,000 we did find, many of which were duplicates of course, 997 were missing from my missing list. I emerged with 3 additions which cost me £5 for the three. I came home happy.

It's called "collecting", I think.

Ken Crossland
ken54@blueyonder.co.uk

The Crosby 45s – British Listing

As he mentioned. Ken wrote the following in our last issue.

...Perhaps it's because the Crosby brotherhood has never seen Bing as a 45 rpm singer that there has been no Crosby 45s listing published by the ICC or its predecessors. Way back in the early 80s, Wayne Martin and others put together some listings in BINGANG of US issues of EPs and boxed sets of 45s. Back further still, my new namesake, Ralph Harding, listed some UK issues in his short-lived Crosby Collector publication, but as far as I can see, no listing exists of Bing on 45, either in the US or the UK.

John Bassett, who edited BING magazine from1971-1975, spotted this and wrote to Ken pointing out that BING #36 (December 1974) contained a 'skeletal' listing of the UK issues which had been prepared by member Jim Hayes. John went on to list the British 45s and EPs issued subsequently and using these

sources and additional help from John, we have put together the following. Incidentally Ken quoted a listing by Paul Pellitier which stated that Bing's "Beautiful Dreamer / By the Light of the Silvery Moon" (Brunswick 05000) was the first of his 45 rpm issues in the UK but subsequent research indicates that this was not so.

7" 45 RPM STANDARD PLAY

BRUNSWICK

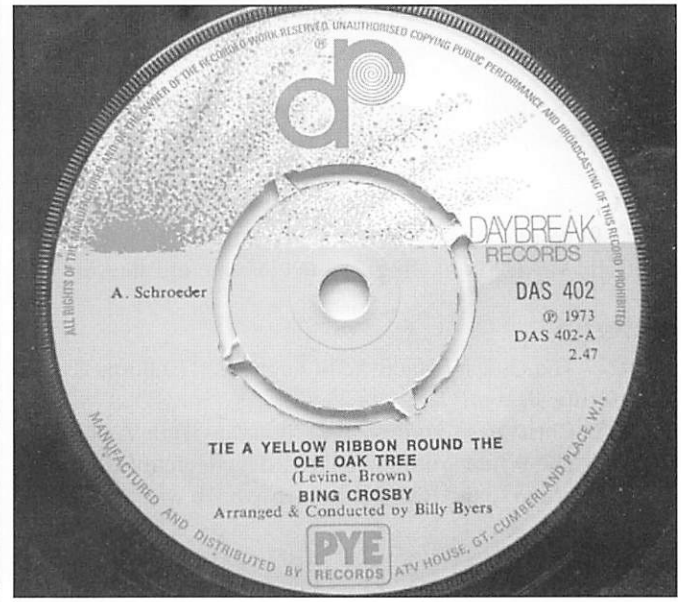
45-03384 White Christmas / Let's Start the New Year Right (later pressing exists without the 45- prefix)
45-03929 Silent Night / Adeste Fideles
45-05224 What A Little Moonlight Can Do / Down By the Riverside
45-05244 Changing Partners / Y'All Come
45-05269 Secret Love / My Love, My Love
45-05277 Young At Heart / I Get So Lonely
45-05304 If There's Anybody Here / Back in the Old Routine
45-05315 Cornbelt Symphony / The Call of the South
45-05339 Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep / What Can You Do with a General?
45-05354 White Christmas / Snow
45-05377 The Song From "Desiree" / I Love Paris
45-05385 Tobermory Bay / The River (Sciummo)
45-05403 Dissertation on the State of Bliss / It's Mine, It's Yours
45-05404 The Search Is Through / The Land Around Us
45-05410 Stranger In Paradise / Who Gave You the Roses?
45-05419 Ohio / A Quiet Girl
45-05430 Jim, Johnny And Jonas / Nobody
45-05451 (All She'd Say Was) "Umh Hum" / She Is the Sunshine of Virginia
45-05486 Angel Bells / There's Music in You
45-05501 Sleigh Bell Serenade / Let's Harmonize
45-05511 Farewell / Early American
45-05543 In a Little Spanish Town / Ol' Man River
45-05558 No Other Love / Sleepy Time Gal
45-05585 Honeysuckle Rose / Swanee
45-05620 Christmas Is A-Comin' / Is Christmas Only a Tree?
45-05674 Around the World / Around the World (non-Bing)
45-05726 Chicago / Alabamy Bound
45-05760 Love in a Home / In the Good Old Summer Time
45-05764 It's Beginning to Look A Lot like Christmas / I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day
45-05770 Gigi / The Next Time It Happens
45-05790 Rain / Church Bells
45-05840 Happy Birthday - Auld Lang Syne / Home, Sweet Home (later pressing exists without the 45- prefix)
05928 Where the Blue of the Night / Goodnight, Sweetheart
05934 Many Happy Returns of the Day / I Apologise

CAPITOL

45-CL 14643 High Society Calypso (non-Bing) / Now You Has Jazz
45-CL 14645 True Love / Well Did You Evah?
45-CL 14761 Man on Fire / Seven Nights a Week
CL 15326 Do You Hear What I Hear? / Christmas Dinner Country Style
CL 15953 True Love / Well Did You Evah?
CL 315 True Love / Well Did You Evah? (issued in a picture sleeve)

DAYBREAK

2111-001 A Time to Be Jolly / And The Bells Rang
DAS 401 Gonna Build A Mountain / Sugar Don't You Know
DAS 402 Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree / It's Not Where You Start



DECCA

45F 21452 Let's Not Be Sensible / Team Work
F 13737 There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About / As Time Goes By
F 13740 Where the Blue of the Night / Goodnight, Sweetheart

GALA

GSP 801 Never Be Afraid / My Own Individual Star

LONDON

45-HL-R 8504 Never Be Afraid / I Love You Whoever You Are
45-HLR 8513 How Lovely Is Christmas / My Own Individual Star
45-HLU 8593 Paris Holiday / Nothing in Common
HLU 10276 More and More / Livin' on Lovin'
HLU 10532 Where the Morning Glories Grow / Eres Tu (That's You)

MCA

MU 1010 Around the World / Around the World (non-Bing)
MU 1048 White Christmas / Silent Night
MU 1107 White Christmas / The First Snowfall (three stages of issue, each with a different label design)
MCA 111 White Christmas / God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen (two stages of issue, each with a different label design and picture sleeve)
MCA 538 Gone Fishin' / Moonlight Bay
BING 1 White Christmas / Silent Night / Christmas in Killarney (issued in a picture sleeve)
BINGP 1 White Christmas / Silent Night / Christmas in Killarney (issued as a picture disc)
BC 111 White Christmas / God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen (issued in a picture sleeve and distributed by Ace Gifts & Cards)

MGM
45-MGM-1098 Incurably Romantic / The Second Time Around
45-MGM-1107 Muskrat Ramble / Dardanella

PHILIPS
45PB 817 Straight Down the Middle / Tomorrow's My Lucky Day
45PB 921 Say One for Me / I Couldn't Care Less

POLYDOR
2058 952 Seasons / On the Very First Day of the Year
2058 958 Yesterday When I Was Young / Sleigh Ride

RCA
RCA BOW 12 Peace on Earth - Little Drummer Boy / Fantastic Voyage (non-Bing) (issued in a picture sleeve)

REPRISE
R 20217 The Oldest Established / Fugue For Tinhorns (issued in a picture sleeve)
R 20352 Christmas Candles / It's Christmas Time Again
R 20424 The White World of Winter / The Secret of Christmas
RS 20645 Step to the Rear / What Do We Do with the World?

UNITED ARTISTS
UP 35852 That's What Life Is All About / The Pleasure of Your Company
UP 36025 I Love To Dance Like They Used To Dance / The Good Old Times
UP 36078 At My Time Of Life / Children
UP 36178 When a Child Is Born / What I Did For Love
UP 36305 Beautiful Memories / Déjà vu

WARNER BROTHERS
45-WB. 83 The Little Drummer Boy / I Wish You a Merry Christmas

7" 45 RPM EXTENDED PLAY

BRUNSWICK
OE 9003 Bing Sings the Hits
OE 9009 Some Fine Old Chestnuts, Volume 1
OE 9010 Some Fine Old Chestnuts, Volume 2
OE 9027 Gary Crosby and Friend
OE 9069 Merry Christmas Volume One
(This appeared in three different forms: 1. Original sleeve [green background, full face Bing photo]. 2. Re-issued sleeve [blue background, snowman and baubles, no Bing pic] 3. White sleeve with Brunswick logo centre front, whilst reverse has "to" and "from" for personalisation [known as the "Gift" issue].)
OE 9070 Merry Christmas Volume Two
OE 9103 Peace and Blessing
OE 9291 Songs I Wish I Had Sung (The First Time Around) Part 1
OE 9292 Songs I Wish I Had Sung (The First Time Around) Part 2
OE 9293 Songs I Wish I Had Sung (The First Time Around) Part 3
OE 9353 To Bali and Morocco with Bing and Bob
OE 9359 Bing and the Dixieland Bands

OE 9362 Club Durant Part 3
OE 9366 New Tricks Part 1
OE 9367 New Tricks Part 2
OE 9368 New Tricks Part 3
OE 9409 The Small One
OE 9410 The Happy Prince
OE 9415 A Christmas Sing With Bing
OE 9421 They Sold A Million – No. 5
OE 9422 They Sold A Million – No. 6
OE 9423 They Sold A Million – No. 7
OE 9424 They Sold A Million – No. 8
OE 9466 Bing Sings - No.1
OE 9467 Bing Sings - No.2
OE 9469 To My Sweetheart
OE 9472 Me and the Moon No. 1
OE 9473 Me and the Moon No. 2
OE 9504 Holiday in Europe

COLUMBIA
SEG 7522 Try a Little Tenderness / How Deep Is the Ocean / Happy-Go-Lucky You / Love Me Tonight
SEG 7553 Frankie Trumbauer & His Orchestra - Featuring Bix Beiderbecke

FONTANA
TFE 17060 The Legendary Bix Volume 2 Bix And Tram
TFE 17061 The Legendary Bix Volume 3 Whiteman Days
TFE 17178 Please
TFE 17179 Remember?
TFE 17186 The Four Greats

HMV
7EG 8139 Mr Crosby and Mr Columbo
7EG 8219 The Young Bing Crosby
7EG 8251 The Young Bing Crosby No. 2
7EG 8405 Swingin' With Bing
7EG 8475 Swingin' With Bing No 2

MCA
MCEP 8 Crosby Christmas

MGM
MGM-EP-762 Bing and Satchmo
MGM ES 3515 Bing and Satchmo (stereo version of MGM-EP-762)

PHILIPS
BBE 12142 Bing

RCA
RCX 152 Going Places with Crosby and Clooney
SRC-7013 Going Places with Crosby and Clooney (stereo version of RCX 152)

REPRISE
R 30018 Return to Paradise Islands
R 30021 South Pacific
R 30025 Finian's Rainbow
R 30039 Robin and the Seven Hoods
R 30040 Adventures in Paradise

WARNER BROTHERS
WEP 6050 Join Bing and Sing Along
WEP 6100 Join Bing and Sing Along - Vol. 2
WEP 6103 Join Bing and Sing Along - Vol. 3
WSE 6100 Join Bing and Sing Along - Vol. 2 (stereo version of WEP 6100)
WSE 6103 Join Bing and Sing Along - Vol. 3 (stereo version of WEP 6103)
WSEP 2050 Join Bing and Sing Along (stereo version of WEP 6050)

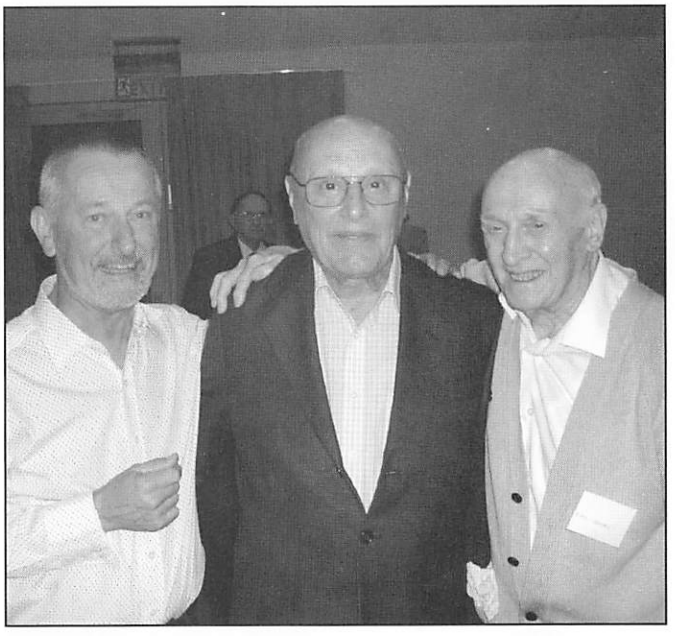
ICC 48th Annual Dinner/Meeting
Weetwood Hall, Leeds - Sunday 6th October 2013

Bob Halls sends his comprehensive report on the Leeds meeting.

Here we go again then, 23 pages of almost illegible scribbled notes taken over 8 hours of this year's meeting/dinner to decipher and make sense of! At the time of writing I was sure what was coming from the mouths of the various contributors was being accurately transcribed to my note pad. Now as I open the first page, it looks like hundreds of spiders have dipped their multiple legs in black ink and performed a dance on each page.

Being of a certain age, I can't start this marathon without a grumpy old man moan or two and I'll kick it off with the Leeds Ring Road. When I walked into the meeting venue, Malcolm already had his pre-meeting music playing, one of which was Bing Crosby singing 'God Bless America'. I thought, 'God Bless the Leeds Ring Road!' Every year I come up from 'down south', I think the Ring Road demons have spies out up the A1, then just as I approach the Ring Road, little red and white cones descend from the skies and block at least one section of carriageway, specifically to get me stuck in a long queue of traffic. What's more amazing, as well as proof it's a conspiracy, is that Bert Bishop came through with no hold-ups at all! I feel better now I've got that off my chest!

So to the meeting and my recollection of what transpired, some of it accurate, a few misguided thoughts on my part which tickled my fancy as I watched and listened and possibly some thoughtful reflections which emerged as a consequence of the presentations delivered throughout the day. But whatever it ends up as, I really hope it's not just another typical meeting report designed to bore the pants off our readers after only one paragraph. Yes we've all had experience of them!



(l to r) Michael Crampton, Renato Failace and Ken Shaw.

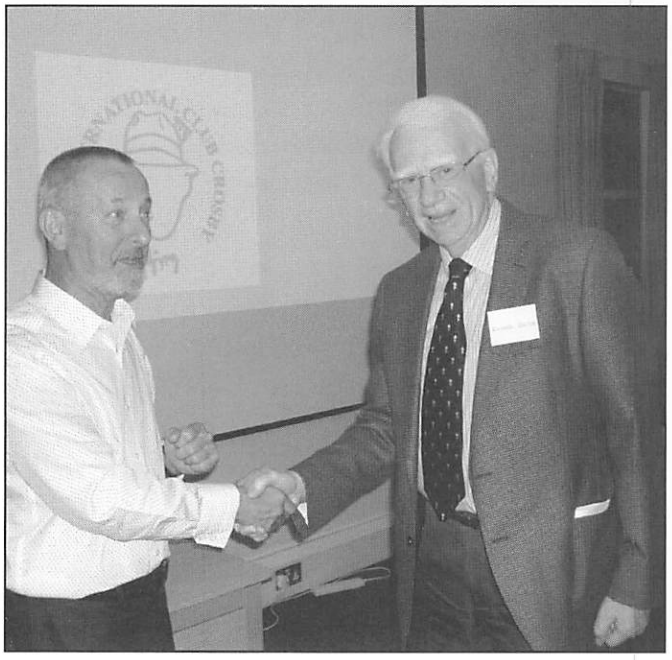
Armed with a print-out of my Facebook page featuring a message from Bing Crosby Enterprises sending us 'Best Wishes for a wonderful Crosby

gathering', I sat, pen poised as 'Where the Blue of the Night' was played. This was followed by **Michael Crampton's** yearly introduction to the meeting, pleased that so many had kept last year's promise and made the journey again to Leeds for our annual tribute to Bing, remembering his legacy and attending for another 'injection of Crosbyana', fourteen of whom had met for dinner the previous evening.

There followed the customary extended welcome to those who had travelled from abroad, including **Ron and Anita Field** from Washington State, **Renato Failace** from Brazil (yes Brazil!) and **Jeremy Rose** faithfully attending again from the South of France.

A warm welcome was extended to **Matthew Long and Emma Harris**, attending for the first time and both Perry Como enthusiasts. I later found Matthew's story quite intriguing and checked him out on **matthewlong.webs.com**, where I found links to YouTube and found him singing a Perry tribute, and oh boy is he good! Download it yourselves, it's quite a treat! Matthew describes himself as a jazz/easy listening vocalist from Birmingham, with a lifelong passion for the American Songbook, dedicated to the legacy of Como. By trade he is a radio producer/hi-fi consultant and has produced a number of Perry Como radio specials for radio stations in the UK and the USA. Check out the above web site. If he comes to Leeds again, perhaps we can persuade him to give us a song!

A warm welcome was also given to **Richard Baker and his wife Ann**. Richard administers the Crosby Fan World Discussion Forum, an Internet based forum dedicated to fostering an interest in the life and work of Bing Crosby.



Michael Crampton welcomes Richard Baker to the meeting.

One of the worst aspects of this ageing club is the drop off rate, as dearly loved and respected members pass on. **Jim Byrne** from Derry in Northern Ireland continually reminded his daughter that the ICC was to receive his precious Bing collection after his demise. Jim died last year and his daughter Bernadette duly arranged to send his massive collection across for the Leeds meeting. Also, this year we were notified of the death of one of the founder members of the enterprise, **Jean Rainey**. Her sister Sheila contacted me some time ago, anxious to pass on her Bing collection and her collection of 'things Bing'. So, with these generous donations, a great selection of CDs, LPs, books, magazines, DVDs and videos was on display and on offer to members for a small donation to club funds.

Sheila has had a rose tree planted in the Hither Green Crematorium in remembrance of Jean, the name of the rose, 'Twice on a Blue Moon', one of her favourite Bing songs being 'Blue Moon'. We are anticipating a photo of the tree in bloom at some stage for the magazine.

All assembled stood in a few moments of silence for Jim, Jean and other deceased members of the ICC.

Michael made reference to the 24 years the team of Malcolm Macfarlane, himself, Wig Wiggins, David Currington and Greg Van Beek have been involved with the club and the annual meeting, and needless to say appreciation from the floor was forthcoming. However, nothing lasts forever and 2015 is the predicted time for both Malcolm and Michael calling time on the yearly gathering in Leeds. More about my thoughts on that later, but next year's date of Sunday 5th October is set in stone, so put it in your diaries, and attend if you can.

Unfortunately the **Armed Forces Radio CD's** anticipated for this meeting were delayed, but by the time this report is read in the next magazine, hopefully distribution will have been accomplished.

On the subject of CD's, Michael alerted us to fact that, along with declining membership and falling income, it is getting very difficult to balance the books, hence the plea to members to carry on purchasing CD's and other items from the ICC, as it really makes the difference.

Michael then handed over the proceedings to Malcolm, who had put together a gigantean agenda, with contributions from the ever respected **Greg Van Beek**, the sixth year he has provided rare material from his collection. We love you Greg. How about gearing up for a visit in 2015, for possibly the final meeting, we'd just love to have you with us.

I'll present Malcolm's agenda as it appears on the script in front of me, section by section and apologies now for any errors, or misunderstandings that might appear as my writing hand went on strike.

Message from Bing – February 1965

Members like myself, who missed the earlier years, love this stuff, it's like Bing is speaking to us from the

grave. In this 1965 recorded message, which he appears to have found the time to do on a regular basis, he relates his many activities and enterprises of that year.

Reflections to follow on this later in the report, but Bing makes reference to his 'Bing Crosby Show' television sitcom of the time, highlighting the much shorter time allowed, compared to film making, with the inevitable consequence *'Hardly get time to go to the men's room.'*

He describes Kathryn's filming opportunities and her charity work and in particular a 'Grand Award of Sports' programme, with four nominees from various sports, selected by a committee presented on a show hosted by himself and Kathryn, featuring people from global locations, amateur and professional.

In April of that year, Bing was planning to come back from Mexico for a one hour tribute to Irving Berlin, but we now know that it did not happen. He mentioned that he had recorded an album with his close friend, Rosemary Clooney. The film 'Stagecoach' was to be filmed later that year, a remake of the old John Wayne film. At the time of dictating his message, Bing was under the impression that Clint Eastwood would be playing Wayne's part, with Henry Fonda and Fred Astaire also starring. They didn't and perhaps it would be interesting to research why! Perhaps they read the script!

The 24th Crosby Pro-Am was played out at Pebble Beach, raising funds for students. Bing had not been able to play any golf for some time as bursitis in both shoulders kept him from playing, much to the pleasure of one Bob Hope!

Bing finished with these words *"I wish you all a wonderful meeting, kind regards and I hope the weather improves."*

Malcolm's Odds and Ends

The Adventures of Ronald G. Field aged 79

Ron Field has almost become legendary within Crosby circles over the years and he and his wife Anita were with us again this year and he delivered a talk about his association with Bing Crosby over the years.

Ron, hailing from Australia, became interested in Bing in 1944 when he started collecting celebrity photos. He was particularly impressed when a letter from Bing arrived addressed to him, followed shortly afterwards by a 10x8 photo of the star. More letters followed from Bing and Ron scoured every source available for locations of Bing's films being shown, attending wherever possible in the Sydney area and writing to numerous radio stations asking for Crosby songs.

Time moved on and in 1955 he saw Bing's wayward son, Gary on tour with Louis Armstrong in Sydney. Ron was also aware of a letter sent by Bing to a local radio presenter at the time which implored the recipient to *'Keep an eye on Gary, he gets a bit wild now and again'*, a bit of an understatement and something which would eventually come back to haunt Bing's legacy.

It was on Friday August 2, 1957 that Ron first met Bing in person. This was in Seattle and Bing was there with Phil Harris for the Seafarers Carnival in which Bing acted as Grand Marshal. The next day, Ron saw Bing in a doorway and took some photos (slides). Several turned up on the same frame and Bing appeared to have a cigarette coming out of his ear, his nose and his forehead!

Then on the advice of Bing himself, Ron found himself at the Crosby HQ on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, where he had an audience with Bing's brother Larry. Ron recalled Larry saying to him, "*What can I do for you, tickets to Disneyland?*" Bing wasn't the only Crosby family member to encounter Ron on that trip; another photo was shown of Ron with Bing's brother, the band leader Bob Crosby.

Ron even managed to include Bing in his marital beginnings, when on the coach trip from Seattle to LA in 1957, he noticed Anita sitting in the chair he had recently vacated and she refused to give it up. So somehow he has held Bing responsible for meeting his future wife!

Phil Crosby was in Australia, about 1964/65, and Ron got to meet him at his hotel at lunch time and they had a beer.

Years went by and whilst living in England in 1965, Ron became aware of where Bing was staying on a visit to the UK and made a speculative phone call, only to be put through to Bing himself, this resulting in a couple of meetings with Bing and obtaining autographs.

Bob Halls with his father who is wearing Bing's hat and holding one of Bing's pipes.

In 1975, Ron dropped some items off to the

Connaught Hotel in London where Bing was staying. This was about midday and at 3.15pm or so, Bing rang him at work. Ron couldn't believe it! Later that year, at Turnberry Golf Club, Ron walked about 12-14 holes with Bing and his sons Harry and Nathaniel. The next day he caddied for Nathaniel in a Pro-Am. Photographs of the events were shown.

Ron was also lucky enough to get tickets for the opening night plus another night of the 1976 London Palladium Show. In 1977 he attended both the opening and closing nights at the Palladium.

So these are the Bing centred 'Adventures of Ronald G. Field' and as Malcolm highlighted at the end of Ron's talk, wherever he has gone Crosby related, there in the midst of proceedings is our Ron. To prove it he displayed a whole string of photos with Ron popping up all over the globe, including one from last year's meeting wearing Bing's hat, now in the custodianship of yours truly.

Not to be out-done, Malcolm then showed an array of photos of other members donning the famed hat, including me. My dear father, in his late eighties loved Bing and when I took the hat round to him and arranged for professional photographs to be taken of him and I wearing the hat, he was overcome with emotion. He reckons it made his life complete. I don't think we realise sometimes, the effect that personalities like Bing had on this generation. Soppy old nostalgia? I don't think so!

Bing at Cockermouth – August 1966

This fishing visit for a television film was featured at a previous meeting when Radio Cumbria attended our gathering, but one of the spin offs to the filming, was that our own Michael Crampton aged 23 years, with others, appeared on the screen in a photo with Bing after a meeting was arranged at his hotel.

Many of us didn't get the opportunity for a face-to-face meeting with Bing, so again, for younger and new members, these recollections and photos are invaluable. Michael touched on the ordinariness of Crosby, who always took the time to meet and chat with fans and was always interested in what they had to say.

Bear in mind this was a man once described as the most well known person on the planet, his music, especially in the war years touching millions. (More about that later). But as Michael said, this was a man who stopped off to visit and have a cup of tea with his butler's mother whilst in the area and when entertaining Michael's group in the photo, got a tray himself and went to get everyone a drink, remembering what all eight people had asked for.

Michael was in Bing's company three times, the first being in 1961 at Wembley TV Studios whilst making a TV show. The Cockermouth meeting was arranged for 8pm and exactly on time the meeting started, finishing on the dot of 9pm, the agreed time.

This was another aspect of Crosby's character, precise timing. But again Michael echoed Bing's easy manner and who in conversation asked him, *'Michael where are you from?'* *'Leeds'* was the reply. *'Ah Leeds, that's Yorkshire,'* said Bing. Every one of the group went through the same individual questioning! When the photo opportunity came, Bing insisted they went out into a hallway, rather than inconvenience other people using the venue.

Apparently this meeting, with photos is described in BING magazine #4. If you have a spare copy of that Michael, I'd love one. Was I jealous when I heard this story? Absolutely! Seething with it!

Bing's Basement – Sirius XM – Arne Fogel

Much has been written about the plethora of unreleased material located in Bing's basement, the Mosaic Collection one of the results, but Malcolm played three items of interest which have surfaced in the recent broadcasts on SiriusXM.

The first was a 1976 recording session of 'White Christmas' which was intended for insertion in the Palladium LP, but was not used.

There followed a 1959 NATO song, with guitarist Vince Terri, to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of NATO. This had been completely unknown and there is no mention of it anywhere. It contains words like;

'10 years have passed since people lived in fear and dread

'We live again in peace and strength behind the NATO shield'

I'm not sure if many people globally would be quite as complimentary of NATO now, just a question, not an opinion!

This cameo finished with a 'Happy Birthday, Papa Bing' solo from Louis Armstrong, Satchmo singing and playing trumpet and using these words;

'Pappa Bing Crosby, that's what I call him' and 'Bing and all the little Bingy's, don't forget ole Satchmo.'

Philco Radio Time – 23 April 1947

Malcolm had found a radio recording of this particular show that didn't go too well, Crosby losing his way in the middle of 'Time after Time' with Les Paul on guitar. After forgetting the words, Les comes in with his bit and Bing laughs and says *'So smug, he knows it you see - first time he ever rehearsed.'* The sequence is so warm and funny, so much so that they left it in for the radio broadcast. It's funny though, even when Bing misses his lines, he still seems to make it sound as if it was all planned, with immaculate timing after his little quips about his mistakes.

Some weeks later, Bing sang the song again on his radio show saying *'Now here's a tune I attempted before and I got all mixed up.'* But wow when you heard the finished article, that's when you appreciate the genius and power of Bing at the height of his talent.

White Christmas – Michael Bublé

Duets by modern artists with deceased singers are hated by some and appreciated by others and I suppose we have all heard those where one could ask the question, would the artist of yesteryear have agreed to sing with the particular modern day singer?

However we all saw Michael Bublé's rendition of' 'White Christmas' with Bing last year and I have no doubt that Bing would have relished the idea of singing with such a talent as Michael. But what was interesting was how it was achieved and Malcolm showed footage from the original show in 1971 and then the Bublé version. I liked the question and answer intro; *Bing I was wondering if we could sing 'White Christmas' together' Bing 'No.' Bublé 'It's one of my favourite songs.' Bing 'Not a chance, forget it'. Bublé 'I have the technology'* and Bing turns toward him with a frown, but a little nod of the head. We then get scene blending of Crosby's 1971 Christmas Show as it was with Christmas tree, soft lights etc. Well I liked it!

Tiffany & Co Commercial 2012

Malcolm treated us to this modern commercial with Bing singing 'You're All I Want for Christmas'. It's nice to see his voice used in this way and of course, it helps to keep his memory alive. So well done Tiffany & Co and may countless others utilize the extensive range of Bing options for their adverts and commercials in the future!

Song cut from 'White Christmas'

This was a song performed by Bing and Danny Kaye, called 'Santa Claus', which although filmed and recorded, never made it into the final cut of the film. Albeit a bouncy, jolly little Christmas song, as Malcolm pointed out, *'Glad it wasn't included in the film.'* Most agreed I think.

Bing sings "White Christmas" in the movie.

However, other parts of *White Christmas* were played, including the part where a fake Christmas stage was set up near the battlefield in World War Two, hundreds of battle worn, homesick American soldiers sat silent and tearful as Bing, with a snow laden background containing a church spire, a sparkling Christmas tree and the sound of gunfire and explosions in the background, sang 'White Christmas'.

You have to be hard-hearted not to shed at tear at this one, but it's the relevance of it which really digs deep into the emotions.

Malcolm related a story when he met an ex-soldier who was there when Bing really did visit the battlefield and sing 'White Christmas'. The old soldier broke down in tears as he described it. I know now that I'll remember that poignant story every time I see that part of the film, and I know what will happen!

Enough said!

Visit to Carolyn Schneider's Home in Las Vegas

Bing's niece Carolyn has done more to keep his memory alive than most over the last few years, writing a series of books about her 'Uncle Bing' and providing an insight into life in the Crosby family as a young girl. She has toured the States giving talks, promoted her books and even attended one of the ICC meetings in Leeds.

Malcolm visited her in her home this year and saw firsthand her remarkable collection of 'Bing things' and the material she uses for her book promotions and talks, including a replica of Bing's jacket, the Crosby family Bible, featuring Capt. Nathaniel Crosby, who helped to found the City of Portland, the Bible dated 1832 and very fragile, showing lists of births, marriages and deaths in the family over the years.

Carolyn even had an x-ray of Bing Crosby's teeth from impressions taken by his dentist, Dr. Bob Morrison, and a booklet of celebrities Morrison had treated, including Bing.

Carolyn comes over, like Bing as a very ordinary and nice person and she stated on a recording of the meeting with Malcolm, that she has never had a bad experience when promoting Bing's memory, *'It's always positive,'* she said. Asked why she does it, she said *'To keep his memory alive, but also in appreciation of the times with Uncle Bing.'* Long may it continue Carolyn.

Auroratone

This was the title on Malcolm's agenda and to be honest I'm still not really sure what it was about, but suffice it to say that we were treated to a video of therapeutic psychedelia from the 1940s. Apparently this display of music in hippy floral colours swirling on the screen, with Crosby singing to an old fashioned organ accompaniment, was designed as a relaxation aid. The film was used in army and navy hospitals in the

treatment of neuropsychiatric and severe migraine cases. It was a collaboration between one Cecil Stokes (1910-1956) and Bing to help servicemen and Bing recorded special material for them with the organ accompaniment of Eddie Dunstedter. The example we saw however used Bing's recording of "When the Organ Played 'O Promise Me'" with Dunstedter.

Command Performance – Treasure Island October 1939

This video, featuring Bing in a Command Performance for the 200th Anniversary of the Navy, is probably the only footage of him doing a radio show. The sound quality wasn't good and we saw Bing taking part in a series of verbal exchanges before he brought the tribute to an end. As Malcolm pointed out, this footage is very rare. Further details of this show can be found in John Jensen's article earlier in this issue.

Crosby Fan World

Malcolm put up a slide highlighting this excellent web site which is run by Richard Baker. He asked for a show of hands from those who regularly visit the site and received an encouraging response. Malcolm mentioned that a recent discussion topic on the site centred on Bing singing in German for ABSIE during WWII and we then heard a short extract of Bing and then Dinah Shore singing German phonetically as part of propaganda directed at the German people.

John Marshall DVD-ROM

Malcolm then played a DVD-ROM called 'Bing - A Night at the Movies', still a work in progress by John Marshall, a stalwart Bing supporter over the years. John has amassed a great deal of information, including press reports of Crosby's films. Each film has accompanying photos, posters etc and it is obviously a work of massive research and very significant in respect of Crosby's film work.

John had asked for views and comments about the proposed DVD-ROM and various views were expressed from the floor. The general impression was that this work could be important from the historical perspective and should be promoted, possibly with music added, links included and even as a book, rather than a DVD.

Malcolm promised to feed back to John in due course. *(Editor: John has since made substantial improvements to his presentation and it really is worth watching now. He has converted it to a PowerPoint file and it can be downloaded at the following address. Be patient as it takes some minutes to download.*
http://archive.org/download/BingANightPOWERPOINT/BingANight.ppt
There is also a link on the BING magazine web site)

At this point in the meeting, I was praying for dinner as my wrist started to complain, but the Greg Van Beek section beckoned and forward we went, onward and upward! So if you need a break from reading this, spare a thought for me typing it and trying to decipher my notes.

Greg Van Beek DVD

Greg broadcasts regularly in the States and Bing Crosby is central to much of what he puts out, so he is well up there in the top ten when it comes to keeping Bing's memory alive. This is the sixth successive year he has come up trumps for us at Leeds. Great stuff Greg and many thanks.

We started with an appeal from Bing for the American Cancer Society, encouraging contributions and emphasising the importance of early diagnosis.

We were then treated to an episode of **'The Bing Crosby Show'** from the 60's, featuring Bing and his co-star Beverly Garland. One wonders what Bing was thinking when he agreed to take on this role. He certainly didn't need the money and surely it didn't really enhance his career or reputation.

Beverly Garland had a line in this episode which went *'Bing, what's a nice fella like you doing in a place like this'?* A prophetic line indeed! And to think Bing was once offered the role of 'Columbo'. Eat your heart out Peter Falk!

Dinner

Somewhere in the middle of all this we all sat down to an excellent and far too fattening dinner, where unlike last year when Bert Bishop's Essex Mob (as I affectionately call them) managed to serve me with stone cold coffee, I escaped whilst the going was good.

So to the finale!

Guth – Bing Crosby

This is the documentary shown on the Irish TV channel TG4 recently. Much of it is in Gaelic with English subtitles. Member Derek Perkins had rushed over DVD copies of the show for us but with time running against him, Malcolm had to cut a showing of the DVD from the programme. However he was able to auction three of the DVDs supplied by Derek for club funds.

Interview with Bing and Kathryn

Malcolm showed extracts from a 1976 Interview with Bing and Kathryn and for me, this was the highlight of the day

Kathryn looked radiant and beautiful and was defensive and stoically supportive of her husband, who in my view looked comfortable and relaxed, yet sometimes out of his comfort zone. And it was in those moments that Kathryn showed her strength of character and why the marriage was so successful, despite the huge age gap.

Some penetrating and personal questions which Bing would have avoided in previous years were handled with real honesty and conviction and when the comfort

zone was breached, there was Kathryn to step into the breach, all guns firing. I found this intriguing and very enlightening, forming a real admiration for a woman who I had always regarded as being in the background and not very confident.

Without going into detail about the areas covered, Bing talked about a time he blended into the New York subway, having to stand, without a seat and not being recognised. Kathryn admitted she was more of a fan of Charlton Heston than Bing when she was younger and at first wasn't that impressed when this voice referred to her as Tex and it was Bing Crosby.

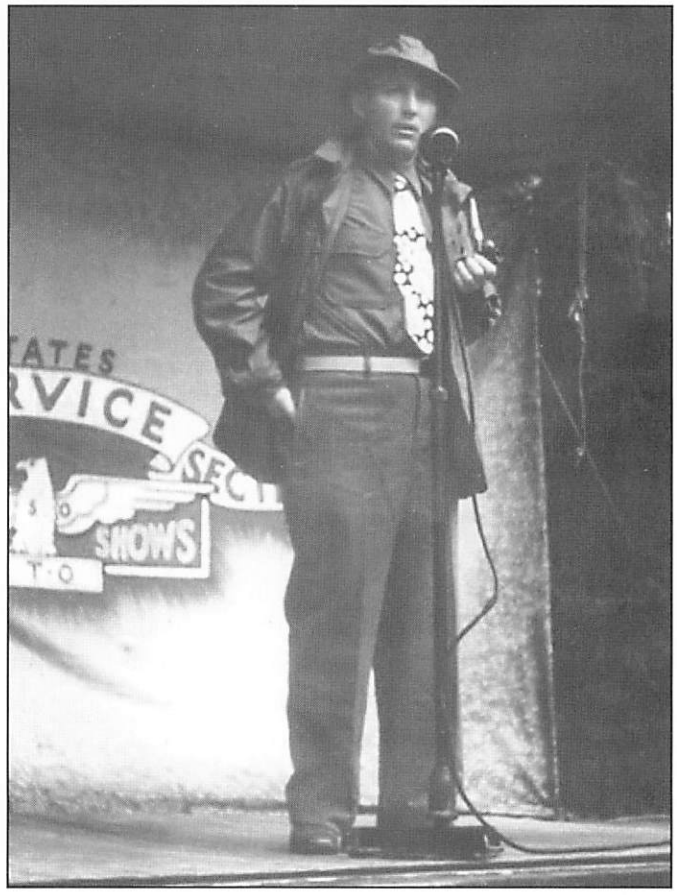
Bing talked at length about his contributions to Gonzaga University and looked a bit embarrassed when praise was heaped on him, but he seemed serious somehow and less inclined to make light of things, even his friend Bob Hope was seriously praised for his massive charity work and how accessible he was in his efforts to raise money for different causes. He spoke so fondly of him and his admiration of his work ethic, something Bing had always struggled with, describing himself as basically a lazy man. He made the point that Hope was never still and apart from his golf, had few interests other than work and his charities. *'I can sit down a couple of hours with a book, can't imagine Bob doing that,'* he said.

The big questions then came in one after the other, one which I thought Bing would really baulk against. *'Gary had a problem with drink and so did you of course'*, with Bing handling the question well, but clearly out of his comfort zone, for want of another phrase.

And this is where Kathryn literally took over, restrained and choosing her words carefully and intelligently, with Bing sitting back and looking admiringly at her whilst she held court. Then to lighten the moment she came in with the coup de grâce! *'But you know, people think it's quite weird to be married to a priest.'*

The final question was *'Why are you so happy Bing Crosby?'* Then I think we saw the real Bing, in his 70's, a long life behind him, bathed in success and fame, but having lost a wife he loved and having some personal strife with his first family, and some regrets about how he had handled it. But it was a life full of friends and associates and a fine family. This was a Bing few had seen before and not far from his death, a basically nice man, vulnerable at times, but honest and in love, even at his age.

He was asked what his greatest memories were and that's where we come to the previously mentioned soldiers on the battlefields of Europe. You could see his eyes welling up as he described performing to hundreds of troops, seeing the tears in their eyes as he sang 'White Christmas' to them, knowing many would never see a Christmas again, or he would come across them in a hospital days later having been injured.



Bing prepares to sing "White Christmas" to the troops in France in 1944."

I have always been uncomfortable with some of the things written about Bing, but I found this reassuring and realised that albeit a film, *White Christmas*, both song, and film have a real relevance to what actually happened and something Bing didn't use to seek popularity. Just remember the ex-soldier who broke down in tears with Malcolm Macfarlane.

Bing at the Movies – Volume 5

I rambled on last year, as I tend to do (why use one word when twenty will do) about Malcolm Macfarlane's tireless efforts to produce material for this conference and I hope he wasn't too embarrassed by all the accolades presented in the 2012 report.

So suffice it to say that he did not disappoint this year, culminating in another superb DVD presentation of Bing at the Movies, Vol. 5. Quite how he manages to put together such an expansive two hour DVD of Bing's film work, without duplicating anything over five occasions is beyond me!

This one started with 'In My Hideaway' and finished with 'White Christmas' and it all blended in perfectly well and provided the ever appreciative audience with a masterful collection of Bing at his best. The titles were: 1. In My Hideaway 2. Lovable 3. Auf Wiedersehn, My Dear 4. – You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me – A Ghost of a Chance – Please 5. The Day You Came Along – Thanks 6. I'm Hummin', I'm Whistlin', I'm Singin' 7. Temptation 8. I

Positively Refuse to Sing – Goodnight, Lovely Little Lady – Once in a Blue Moon 9. With Every Breath I Take 10. Round-Up Lullaby 11. One Two, Button Your Shoe (& finale) 12. Smarty 13. On the Sentimental Side 14. The Funny Old Hills 15. A Man and His Dream – If I Was a Millionaire – Go Fly a Kite 16. African Etude 17. Tomorrow's My Lucky Day 18. Lazy – Happy Holiday – Let's Start the New Year Right – Song of Freedom 19. Moonlight Becomes You 20. Sunday, Monday or Always – Swing Low, Sweet Chariot – She's from Missouri – If You Please 21. The Road to Victory 22. Out of This World 23. Goodtime Charlie – Welcome to My Dreams 24. You Don't Have to Know the Language 25. The Headless Horseman 26. Sure Thing – The Horse Told Me 27. *Off Limits* clip 28. And You'll Be Home – Accidents Will Happen (early version) 29. *Son of Paleface* clip 30. The Magic Window 31. You're a Grand Old Flag 32. One Little Candle 33. *Scared Stiff* clip 34. It's Mine, It's Yours – The Land Around Us 35. *Pepe* cameo 36. The Road to Hong Kong 37. White Christmas finale

The DVD was auctioned as in previous years and Ken Shaw took it away for £35 for club funds.

So once again, thank you Malcolm, we are, as ever in awe of what you produce on our behalf.

The End Bit

Inevitably we are fast approaching the twilight years of the Leeds gathering and Malcolm and Michael have set a final date of 2015, the 50th Anniversary of the event as the last one.

The Leeds ritual may become a faded memory, but who knows what phoenix will rise from the ashes? There will still be a nucleus of Bing admirers who might want to meet for a meal and a chat and who are willing to travel if something is organised. Am I volunteering? Is anyone reading this feeling a little nudge? I know Malcolm and Michael would be very pleased to see a gathering of some sort continue.

Whatever happens, the magazine will continue to be published and although numbers cannot fail to decline, who knows in what direction the ICC will go? Should we think about getting together in the next two years to see what's possible?

My feeling is that there are active members still anxious to see Bing's memory kept alive, but his music will still be heard, especially at Christmas and because of the tireless efforts of a group of enthusiasts who refuse to cave in to modern trends and continue to promote Bing and other performer's music, new initiatives are still possible. Just look at the young Matthew highlighted earlier in this report and his passion for Perry Como. Feeling excited already!

But that's two years away and somehow I feel we can make 2015 extra special and something to remember to our dying days.

At the time of writing this report, it is only a day after Leeds and as I reflect on the meeting, I see the faces of lovely people, many growing older and slower as the years roll on. I saw empty chairs and recalled the faces of members no longer with us, names I see when I look back at old BING magazines. I scanned the piles of donated records, cassettes, CD's and DVD's and various magazines, booklets and sheet music waiting to be claimed by anyone who would give them a good home and probably, like others there, felt a little sad as nostalgia flowed through us. Nothing lasts forever and it's always good to move on and not harp on about the past.

But sometimes the past has lessons for the future and the humanity and warmth in Bing's music, often missing in today's music, will live on. Reflecting on the Leeds meeting, one cannot but yearn for more camaraderie, courtesy and respect in our modern world and I'm not too sure how Bing and some of the long gone members of the ICC would view the World now.

All the best

Bob Halls

(Editor: My thanks to Bob for his comprehensive report. It was indeed a very pleasant get-together. It was really lovely to hear spontaneous applause breaking out when Bing sang "Temptation" and other songs in the movie song presentation. Several people wrote to express their thanks and one of these was ***Jeremy Rose*** *who said:*

Yet again, Malcolm, Michael and the extended world-wide team came up trumps with another great meeting.

I wasn't able to get there for the pre-meeting dinner on the Saturday evening, but arriving on the Sunday I was struck – yet again – by the feeling of being amongst friends. As I've said before in these pages, we all meet up for a few hours once a year to celebrate the life and career of a certain Mr. Crosby and then we all go our separate ways, already looking forward to meeting again the following year.

The enthusiasm never fades. At one point during the afternoon, Michael – who has attended all 48 (!) of these meetings and could surely be forgiven for being a little laid-back about it all – came over to me and could barely contain his excitement as he told he how fantastic it is to have an annual "Bing-Fest" (my word, not his..!) amongst like-minded people.

I know that elsewhere in this issue, Bob Halls will have given his customary detailed report on the proceedings, which will give anyone who couldn't make it to Leeds an atmospheric blow-by-blow account of the day's events.

Malcolm's presentation was – as always – wide-ranging, informative and entertaining, and Greg Van Beek sent his annual DVD of video rarities. (No "Hollywood Palace" this year, alas, but please, BCE, let's have an official DVD release of Bing's contributions to this show soon!)

For my part, I was very pleased to renew acquaintances with Ron and Anita Field and Chris Simmons and his daughter Theresa. It was also particularly gratifying to finally meet Richard ("Jarbie") Baker and his wife, Ann. Richard has been extremely

helpful to me with my collecting efforts over the past few years, and is also currently doing a grand job with the "Keeping Track" section of BING magazine. He also maintains the wonderful "Crosby Fan World" web-site – a treasure-trove of all things Crosby and well worth visiting and supporting.

http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/

Finally, if I had to pick just one memory to take away from this year's meeting, it would be when Michael stood up and told us about his meeting with Bing and Kathryn at the Trout Hotel, Cockermouth in 1966. I wasn't aware of this meeting, and as Michael spoke about it, it became clear that even after all these years, he was still – understandably – very proud and emotional about the time he spent with Bing that evening.

It is experiences such as that which keep me coming back to Leeds year after year. See you all in 2014!

Jeremy Rose)

BING ON THE BOX

Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

Bing featured on Irish TV channel

Members may recall from BING #160 (page 22), that your editor was interviewed for an Irish TV documentary a couple of years ago as were our members George O'Reilly ("Bing's favourite Irishman"), Howard Crosby (Bing's nephew) and Carolyn Schneider (Bing's niece) amongst others.

George O'Reilly with Bing.

The TG4 channel eventually showed the programme on September 26 as part of a six-part series called *Guth* (this means 'voice'). The press release stated that the series took "some of the biggest musical icons in living memory" – Bing, John Lydon, Morrissey and Marr (of The Smiths), Dusty Springfield, John Lennon, and the Gallagher Brothers among them – and examined the role their Irish heritage played in their lives and careers. In turn, the impact they had in Ireland was discussed.

The TG4 channel broadcasts in Gaelic but the contributions in that language were subtitled for the rest of us. The Bing episode started the series on September 26 and told the story well. The ICC got a credit ("International Crosby Club") as did George O'Reilly and Carolyn Schneider.

The programme brought out Bing's importance as an entertainer and the way he helped blaze a path for Irish-Americans in the USA. Howard Crosby did an excellent job in talking about his Uncle Bing. Several brief film clips and newsreel items from Bing's visits to Ireland were seen. I had to smile as in most of the newsreel clips George O'Reilly could be seen alongside Bing. Surprisingly poorish quality extracts from Bing's 1967 TV show *A Little Bit of Irish* were also used and Buddy Bregman (the producer) was interviewed about the show and the use of the Guinness brewery.

A theme which came out was that Bing's "crooning" was rooted in sean-nós singing, the traditional Irish singing technique. It was suggested that Bing's vocal approach drew from the ancient form of Irish song, in which the voice wavers between notes to create a mournful sound. Sean Williams, an ethno-musicologist at Evergreen State College in Washington State, where she teaches Irish studies and is a lecturer on sean-nós, said: "One of the vocal ornaments that Crosby would use is called a mordent, and in a lot of his melodies, especially in the slow melodies you'll hear him use this technique."

Overall, this 45-minute programme was a warm look at Bing and his Irish heritage and it was good to hear some relatively young "talking heads" singing his praises.

TV highlights - USA & Canada

Not much seen on TV in recent months, just these few (albeit rare in some cases) films.

Angels in the Outfield	TCM
High Society	TCM
Man on Fire	TCM
Pepe	TCM
Robin and the 7 Hoods	TCM

In October, Ron Field spotted a program on BBC America called "Royal Babies" which featured a couple of Bing songs in the first seven minutes – "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby" and "My Honey's Lovin' Arms".

USA Radio

In our last issue, we gave the exciting news that the *SiriusXM* 40s on 4 channel was to commence broadcasting some more **"Bing's Basement"** shows which had been created by Robert Bader of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Arne Fogel. These monthly episodes commenced on July 4 and the first one was a patriotic edition to tie in with Independence Day. Very well put together and expertly narrated by Arne, it opened with a short extract from the 1945 version of "Where the Blue of the Night" and continued with the following songs.

Star-Spangled Banner (1939) – chat from *The Bing Crosby Show* July 4, 1955 – America the Beautiful (with Anna Maria Alberghetti, from Chesterfield Nov. 14, 1951) – The Star-Spangled Banner (1946 narration version) – Battle Hymn of the Republic / America / When Johnny Comes Marching Home / America the Beautiful (1960 singalong) – Old Soldiers Never Die (1951) – This Is a Great Country (1964) – God Bless America (1939) – This Land Is Your Land (1964) – What's More American (1968) – Ballad for Americans (1940) – Early American (1945 test) – Song of Freedom (1942) – Early American (1950) – I'll Be Seeing You (Command Performance, July 5, 1945) – The NATO Song.

It was great to listen to "Ballad for Americans" all the way through and to recall what an absolutely superb vocal performance that was. The great interest for collectors though was the inclusion of a song Bing recorded on February 9, 1959 to mark the tenth anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It is not known whether this was ever issued or indeed heard by anyone outside the studio that day. Apparently Jimmie Rodgers and Perry Como were thought to have recorded the song too. Perhaps NATO eventually decided that they didn't want a song after all.

The book *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance Through Twentieth-Century Europe* by Victoria De Grazia (31 Oct 2006) describes how J. Walter Thompson took over the NATO Public Relations account at a time when many Americans in the mid-1950s were growing weary of their overseas commitments. JWT advised that for its 10th anniversary, in 1959, NATO should be reshaped to "forge a history of communication and tradition", and "make clear to the world the striking superiority, as much moral as material, of the Western conception of Man and his dignity." The campaign called for a NATO birthday celebration, a NATO song featuring Rosemary Clooney, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Harry Belafonte, among others, and slogans like "Good Night, sleep tight, NATO stands on guard" and "N-A-T-O - four letters that spell peace". Hence the song but no trace can be found of any of the versions mentioned other than Bing's which has just been discovered.

The second monthly episode of "Bing's Basement" eventually appeared on August 17 after some earlier confusion at SiriusXM with the scheduling but it was worth waiting for. It was a tribute to Louis Armstrong and had obviously been intended to be broadcast close to Satchmo's birthday earlier in the month.

Drawing heavily on the *Bing & Satchmo* album from 1960, the songs played were:

Muskrat Ramble – High Society promo – Now You has Jazz – Gone Fishin' (from Chesterfield May 23, 1951) - Little One – Bing talking about Louis on his radio show broadcast on January 4, 1956 – At the Jazz Band Ball – Let's Sing Like a Dixieland Band – May I – Pennies from Heaven (long version) – Way Down Yonder in New Orleans – Blueberry Hill (from Chesterfield, January 25, 1950) – Lazybones (from Chesterfield, January 25, 1950) – Lazy River – The Preacher – Happy Birthday, Papa Bing (April 25, 1939) – Memphis Blues (from Chesterfield, November 28, 1951)

The exceptional item was undoubtedly Louis singing a special birthday greeting to Bing in 1939 but some of the radio airchecks were fairly rare too.

The third episode was broadcast on September 14 and was titled "Bing Sings Gershwin". This was a delightful hour of Crosby. Arne got us excited by mentioning the 1930 demonstration records of songs for a proposed new Fox film called *Delicious* when George Gershwin used Bing as the singer with Gershwin himself on piano. Bing was paid $50 for the chore. However Arne had to dash our hopes by saying that the discs were not in the Basement and in fact no-one knew where they were. We heard the following (commercial recordings, except where annotated):

Somebody Loves Me (from GE October 23, 1952) – They All Laughed (GE, October 18, 1953) – Strike Up the Band (recorded April 4, 1956 for The Bing Crosby Show) – Bing talks about George Gershwin (extract from Bing Crosby Show July 26, 1955) – Summertime (from GE April 6, 1953) – I Got Plenty 'o Nuttin' – It Ain't Necessarily So – But Not for Me (rarer 'B' take) – Maybe – Love Walked In (KMH, April 28, 1938) – Love Walked In – Swanee (1955) – Swanee (1975) – Dissertation on the State of Bliss – Long Ago (and Far Away) (KMH, April 20, 1944) – Gershwin medley (with Peggy Lee, Oscar Levant and Joe Venuti – Philco February 11, 1948) – Gershwin medley (with Al Jolson – KMH October 16, 1947).

The next Bing's Basement was broadcast on October 19 and was subtitled "Halloween with Bing". I wondered how Arne and Robert Bader would be able to put together a whole hour's broadcast built around Halloween but they managed it! The contents of the show were:

Chat about Halloween – That Old Black Magic (with Buddy Cole) – A Ghost of a Chance (1932) - A Ghost of a Chance (1954) – Chat about Halloween (from Bing Crosby Show, October 31, 1955) – The Yodeling Ghost (with The Andrews Sisters) – Haunted Heart – Here Lies Love – Witchcraft – Ding, Dong, The Witch Is Dead – Ichabod – Chat about Halloween– Don't Break the Spell - The Spell of the Blues – Katrina – Chat about Halloween (from Chesterfield show, October 26, 1949) – Headless Horseman (from Chesterfield show, October 26, 1949) – Halloween skit and song (with Boris Karloff and Victor Moore, from Philco show, October 29, 1947) – Riders in the Sky.

Arne Fogel's own Saturday night radio program "The Bing Shift" is broadcast at 7 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, MN. and it can be picked up internationally, via the KBEM-JAZZ 88 website (http://jazz88.mpls.k12.mn.us/). To give you an idea of the show, Arne's September 28 broadcast was titled "Bing Sings: "Smiles" and the songs played were:

Let a Smile Be Your Umbrella - Smile Right Back at the Sun - When My Baby Smiles at Me (Jack Pleis version) - When My Baby Smiles at Me (Buddy Cole version) - When Irish Eyes Are Smiling - Smiles

PLUS:

I Like to Do Things for You - Deep Purple - Home on the Range (1933) - My Love, My Love - Don't Let a Good Thing Get Away - Day Dreaming - Anniversary Song - I Found a Million Dollar Baby (1931) - Meet the Sun Halfway

Greg Van Beek has been continuing his weekly radio series *Nostalgia Radio Time* on 1420 AM WJUB and incredibly he has now done over 100 of these broadcasts. Greg's show is on for an hour each Saturday starting at 10 pm (CST) / 11 pm (ET) and always has a "Bing Sings" segment. On his July 20 show he included the whole of Bing's Chesterfield broadcast from May 3, 1950 which had Al Jolson and Ella Fitzgerald as guests. The following week, Greg mounted a tribute to Bob Hope and naturally Bing was featured several times including the whole of the *Bob Hope Show* for Swan from December 7, 1948 when Bing guested with Doris Day. You can tune in online at the www.1420thebreeze.com website or you can listen to the previous two weeks shows by going to www.1420thebreeze.com and clicking on the 'audio archives' link.

In BING#163, we mentioned that KEZW and the Glenn Miller Archive at the University of Colorado present the *Star Spangled Radio Hour* every Saturday night at 6pm. Hosts Rick Crandall and Dennis Spragg introduce live big band radio broadcasts from the 30s and 40s each week that likely haven't been heard since they originally aired. On August 10, they broadcast an entire *Mail Call* program (#102) from July 26, 1944 in which Bing was joined by Betty Grable, Connie Haines, Les Paul and Harry Owens amongst others for a tribute to Hawaii. Very good quality and a delight to hear this rare show.

Then on August 31, the *Star Spangled Radio Hour* featured the special Command Performance "Victory Extra" originally broadcast on August 14, 1945. Bing hosted the show which featured an incredible line-up of stars. Bing is heard singing a parody medley with Frank Sinatra and he comes back at the end to sing "White Christmas". On October 26, the *Mail Call* show from October 20, 1943 (#61) was broadcast. Bing was host and guests included Frank Morgan and John Conte. Our man sang "McNamara's Band" and "White Christmas".

Each *Star Spangled Radio Hour* show is also available at www.kezw.com as a podcast for two weeks following the broadcast.

Rich Conaty's long-running "The Big Broadcast" show from New York on WFUV puts a musical spotlight on the classic sounds of the 1920s and '30s which of course includes Bing. It's heard on Sunday nights from 8pm-Midnight (ET) and you can listen again through the WFUV archives on the Internet.

TV highlights - UK

Not too much to report on the TV scene in the UK and the only films shown were:

Alias Jesse James	TCM
Anything Goes (1956)	TCM
Rear Window	More4
The Country Girl	Sky Movies Greats
The Joker Is Wild	TCM

Strictly speaking, two of the items do not really qualify but in *Rear Window*, a record is shown to be playing and we hear Bing singing the *Road to Bali* soundtrack version of "To See You (Is to Love You)". In *The Joker Is Wild*, we see a man in silhouette apparently singing Bing's 1954 version of "June in January".

Bing also popped up in *Duets - The Andy Williams* show which was repeated on BBC4 in September.

There was an unfortunate reference to Bing on **The Alan Titchmarsh Show** on ITV on October 18. This is a daily daytime chat show and the photographer Gered Mankowitz (who took the photos for the "Seasons" album cover) was there complaining about Bing's lack of cooperation as he displayed the "Seasons" photo. This is nothing new and we first became aware of his mean-spirited treatment of Bing in 2001. At that time, Ken Barnes gave a detailed response on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum site so I fired off a complaint to Alan Titchmarsh and to Mankowitz sending them a copy of Ken Barnes' original note. No replies were received. I wish Mankowitz would realise that whatever his plans and those of the record company were, Bing had no knowledge of them and would not have agreed to the session if he had been aware of what was intended. Full details of this matter can be seen on the BING magazine web site in the "Day by Day" section. Look under October 11, 1977.

UK radio

The National Presenters

The final hour on BBC Radio2 on Sunday nights had

been taken by **David Jacobs** since 1998 but in July David announced that he was to leave his Radio 2 show because of ill health. He said: "Over the past two years Radio 2 has given me time to be treated for liver cancer and Parkinson's disease. My producer, Alan Boyd, has been a tower of strength in so many ways and I thank him profusely. We shared a love of so many records and wonderful music."

I emailed him on behalf of the ICC thanking him for playing Bing's records so frequently over the years and wishing him a long and happy retirement.

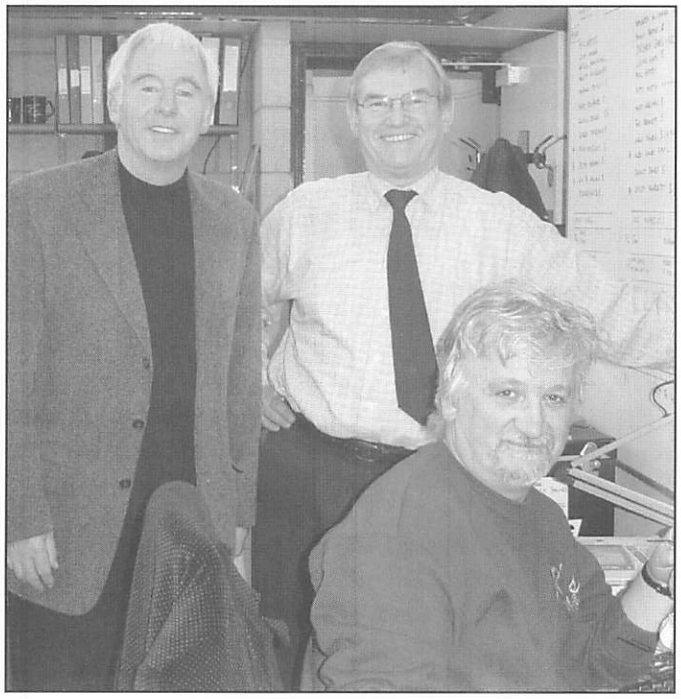
David's last show was broadcast on August 4 and he featured Bing singing "Incurably Romantic" as his final song. He introduced this by saying that we might have noticed that he had not played a solo by Frank Sinatra during the programme and that there was a reason for this. There were, he said, two camps, one favours Frank Sinatra, the other Bing Crosby. He went on to say that he would end by playing his favourite – Bing Crosby.

That was the last record David played in a career going back over 60 years because, sadly, he died on September 2 at the age of 87. We shall miss him.

Desmond Carrington's nationally networked Friday night show on September 6 opened with some words of tribute to David Jacobs and then Desmond played "I Love You, Samantha" by Bing, the orchestral introduction to which David used as his signature tune for many years. It was the first Bing track Desmond had played for several months. The following week he played Bing again with "There's No Business Like Show Business" which also has Dick Haymes and the Andrews Sisters on the record. But then Desmond said, "That was Dick Haymes, not Bing Crosby, with the Andrews Sisters." Most unlike Desmond and I fired off an email pointing out the heinous crime. This may have done some good because on October 18, Desmond played two Bing tracks, "Friendly Islands" and "Isle of Capri" with Rosie.

Don Black, the multi award-winning lyricist, has taken over the David Jacobs Radio2 slot on Sunday nights and is playing "our kind of music" as well. Bing soon appeared with Rosemary Clooney singing "How About You" and an unusual inclusion was Bing and Judy Garland singing "How Could You Believe Me When I Said I Love You When You Know I've Been a Liar All My Life" from a 1951 Chesterfield show. We had "The Oldest Established" and then Don followed up with "Come Share the Wine" on a subsequent show. I had forgotten that Mr. Black had written the lyrics to this song and he said how proud he was that Bing recorded it. He commented that it wasn't as popular as "White Christmas" but it was in his house!

There was more bad news for the traditional BBC Radio2 listener too. **Russell Davies** on his excellent show on Sunday, which started back on January 13, 2002, has been linking many songs as part of his consideration of the work of various songwriters and musicians. In August, we received the disappointing news that Russell's Sunday night show was to be dropped from October. The decision did not of course please Russell who said, "Money is always mentioned as being part of it, but I don't really think much money will be saved from getting rid of me. I think there's a cultural shift going on. I don't know why they're doing it. It seems to be at the expense of people who know anything before The Beatles." A good number of us joined in a petition to keep Russell on the air and member Colin Stewart wrote a letter of protest to the *Daily Telegraph* but it was all to no avail.



Russell (seated) with his producer Roy Oakshott (right) and your Editor back in 2003 when Russell was working on his superb 3-part series on Bing.

Russell kept including Bing until the end of his almost 600-show run and in a tribute to David Jacobs, he too used "I Love You, Samantha". In his final show on September 29, Russell paid a nice accolade to Bing and praised our magazine as being much the liveliest of the regular fan magazines devoted to singers before playing "Home Cookin'". Russell explained that his young twins always request the song on long car journeys. Two budding fans for the future! The song was taken from Jonzo #51 and Russell described that series and the subsequent "Through the Years" CDs on Sepia saying that Bing has indeed been well looked after by his devotees. He also gave some positive mentions about the new Rosemary Clooney book too. The good news is that Russell is returning with a late night interview show early in December for an initial run of 13 weeks and we look forward to this.

Clare Teal, who followed Russell until September 29, chimed in only occasionally with a Crosby song but she slotted in "Blue (And Broken Hearted)", "Pennies from Heaven" (V-disc with Tommy Dorsey) and "Stay on the Right Side of the Road". Clare began a new two hour show on October 6 filling Russell Davies's old slot as well as her own. On October 20, Sir Tim Rice was her guest and he requested "Now You Has Jazz" leading Clare to say afterwards "Just exquisite."

Elaine Paige in her Sunday show occasionally fits in a Bing item and in her 'Back to Back Special' on September 1st she played the groaner's "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?" followed by a version of the same

song by Eartha Kitt. An interesting contrast! Elaine also used the Crosby / Mills Brothers version of "Dinah" in one of her later shows.

Len Goodman, one of the judges on *Strictly Come Dancing* and on *Dancing with the Stars* in the USA hosted a two hour easy listening show on BBC Radio2 (Sundays 5 p.m.) on September 1st for several weeks until Paul O'Grady returned to that slot. It wasn't long before Bing made an appearance and "Dinah" with the Mills Brothers was heard with Len saying that it was one of his father's favourite records.

Many UK members will remember the late **Benny Green** who also had a much-loved Sunday radio show featuring the Great American Songbook. 15 years after he died, Benny Green's son Leo celebrated his father's legacy with a selection of interviews and comment from the Radio 2 archive alongside some of Benny's favourite music. Benny died on Monday June 22nd 1998, having missed his Radio 2 show from the preceding day. The script for that missing show has recently been unearthed by the Green family, and on August 6th Leo recreated it on Radio 2, using his father's words and selection of music. Pleasingly, Bing was featured in "Dancing in the Dark" and with Fred Astaire in "I've a Shooting Box in Scotland".

Overall however, there is a danger that BBC Radio2 may become a wasteland in the future as far as Bing is concerned, but, we shall still have many excellent local radio shows...

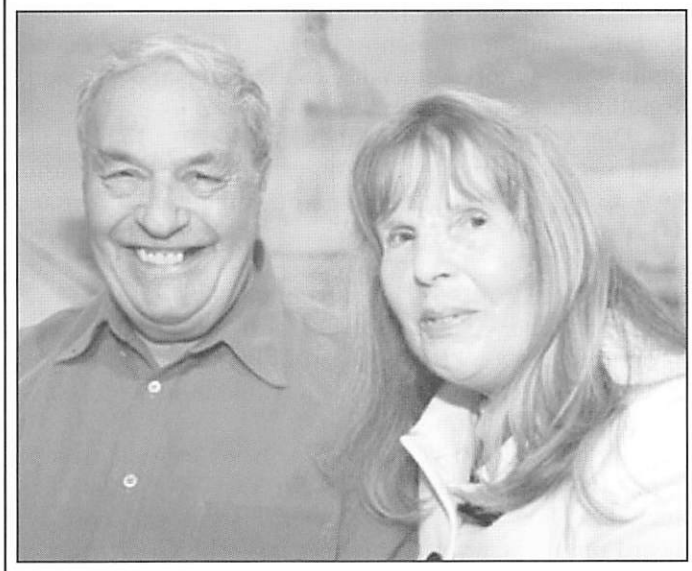
The local radio presenters

Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria (and on the Internet at www.bbc.co.uk/radiocumbria) still features Bing on her Saturday night shows (10pm-midnight). Your editor was interviewed by Anne about the new Rosemary Clooney book on her show on July 20 and she included Bing and Rosemary singing "On a Slow Boat to China" from the Palladium show in that segment.

Requests and Anne's own eclectic taste produced no less than 44 Crosby songs in the 4-month period ranging from "If There's Anybody Here" to "The Great Movie Show in the Sky" and even "Lydia, the Tattooed Lady"! Our thanks go to Anne for all she does to keep Bing's memory alive. She continues to welcome requests by email to *anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk.* There's a "Listen again" facility for up to 7 days after the initial broadcast.

Bill and Angela Rennells on their *Harmony Nights* show get plenty of requests for Bing, especially from Crosby stalwarts Stan White and Ian Lawrence. One of Stan's requests was "Till the Clouds Roll By" for all Crosby fans and especially remembering David Jacobs. Stan had supplied the Sepia CDs "Bing in the Hall" and "Bing Sings for the AFRS" to Bill and several requests were heard for songs from them. Ian had the 36th anniversary of Bing's passing noted by requesting "Bali Ha'i". Many other songs were requested by our ICC members and for example they went from "Where the Blue of the Night" (1931) and "Embraceable You" (per Ian Lawrence) to "Black Moonlight" and "All Through the Day" (per Stan White).

Harmony Nights is heard on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet for three hours starting at 10 p.m. on Sunday evenings. This show also has a "Listen Again" option. Email Bill and Angela with your Bing requests at *bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk.*



Bill and Angela Rennells

"The Late Paul Barnes", the big band and jazz oriented show hosted by **Paul Barnes** regularly features Bing and Paul always discusses the Crosby calendar on the first Saturday of the month. In July, Barnsey felt that we had used a splendid photograph and he went on to play the song of the month "Blue and Broken Hearted". He followed this by playing two other songs from that same session in 1946 – "After You've Gone" and "Personality". Looking at the calendar for August, Paul noted that the photo used was one of the most cheerful pictures in the calendar with Jackie Stewart, Sean Connery, Phil Harris and Bing all smiling happily. Paul played "Tomorrow's My Lucky Day" and then he went on to play "Everything Happens to Me" from the *Bing Crosby in the Hall* CD. As part of a subsequent Bob Crosby tribute, Paul used "When My Dreamboat Comes Home" and "Enjoy Yourself". For his look at the September calendar, Paul duly played "September in the Rain" and followed this with "Autumn Leaves". The following month the October photograph was described and "Along the Way to Waikiki" was heard. Barnesy went on to play "I Thought About You" (from the Bing in the Hall CD sent to him by Stan White) and then "I Still Suits Me" (with Lee Wiley, for Ms Wiley's birthday). Paul was another who played "Dinah" with the Mills Brothers during the period under review.

"The Late Paul Barnes" continues to be heard for two hours over seven BBC local radio stations and on the Internet starting at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights. The "Listen again" facility is in place for this show as well. Go to www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk for this. Paul's show is not a request programme but he is always glad to have comments and you can email these to *paul.barnes@bbc.co.uk.*

BBC Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** has been playing a lot more Bing in recent months on his programme of big band swing and balladeers each Sunday from 3pm to 6pm. Selections have varied from "Poinciana" (from a v-disc) to "Everything Happens to

Me" (from the 'Bing in the Hall' CD per Stan White) to a bunch of songs linked to an equestrian theme used by Howard on one particular show – "I'm an Old Cowhand", "Ridin' Down the Canyon", "Empty Saddles" and "El Rancho Grande". There's a "Listen again" facility too at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01hrptl. Email requests to *howard.leader@bbc.co.uk.*

Don't forget **Jim Reilly's** hour-long Bing show which continues on Angel Radio (www.angelradio.co.uk) on Tuesday nights at 10:30 p.m. UK time.

Australia

On October 22, Russell Woolf on his "Drive" programme had a "Bing Day in Drive" on radio station 720 ABC Perth with Bing's songs making up the *Vinyl Tuesday* playlist from 3p.m. to 6p.m.

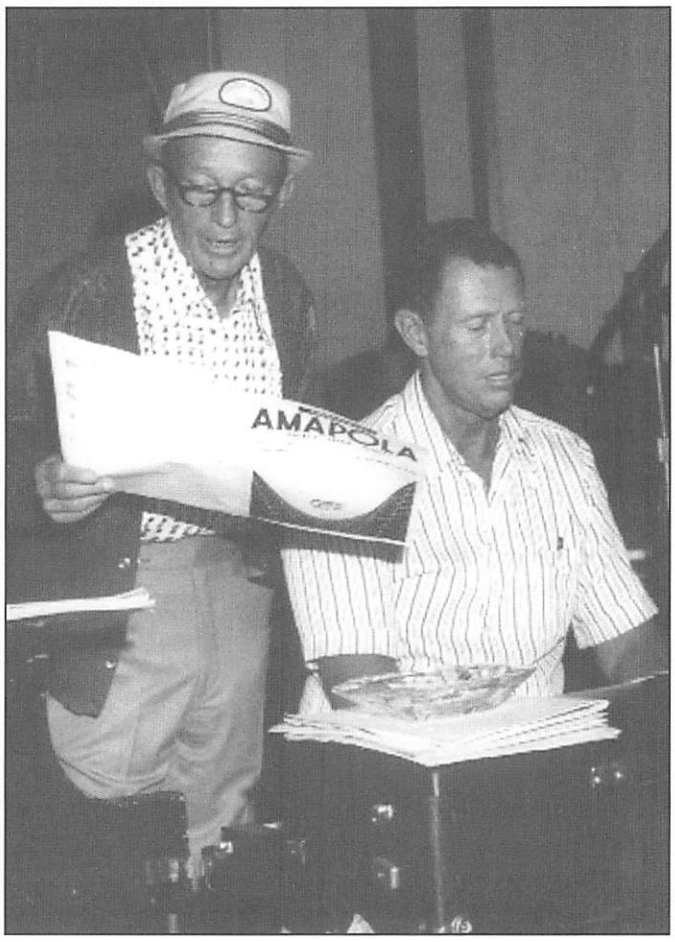
John Funnell's "I've Heard That Song Before" from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. every Wednesday on WNY FM 88.9 includes Bing every week and the show can now be heard online at www.wynfm.org.au/. The Golden Days community radio station on 95.7 FM in Victoria continues to have a half-hour programme at 3.00 p.m. on Wednesday afternoons called "On Air with Bing" which broadcasts a complete Bing Crosby radio show each week. Other radio programmes featuring plenty of Bing are Peter O'Brien's "Music Showcase" on Eastern FM 98.1 (Mondays 12 noon to 2 p.m.) and Loris Young's show on 3WBC FM 94.1 (Tuesdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.).

Malcolm Macfarlane **macwilmslo@aol.com**

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Paul Smith, a jazz pianist, arranger-composer and music director for stars such as Bing, Sammy Davis Jr., Anita O'Day, Mel Tormé, Ella Fitzgerald, Doris Day, the Andrews Sisters, Sarah Vaughan and Rosemary Clooney, died on June 29. He was 91. At 6 feet 5, with hands that easily spanned the piano keyboard well beyond octaves, Smith was an impressive sight on stage. Playing with a versatility comparable to that of Oscar Peterson and a harmonic richness similar to the work of Bill Evans, he was both a brilliant soloist and an accompanist who was highly praised by the many singers with whom he performed. For more than 25 years Smith was the pianist and music director for the "The Steve Allen Comedy Hour." Smith recorded more than five dozen albums — many of which are still available — as a leader of his own groups. As a much-favored accompanist, he recorded with singers and musicians of extraordinarily diverse styles, including Bing, Tony Martin, Red Skelton, Pat Boone, Nat "King" Cole, Pearl Bailey and Dizzy Gillespie, among many others. He worked for more than 11 years as a pianist and conductor with Ella Fitzgerald, and four with Sammy Davis Jr. It was Paul Smith whom Bing asked to arrange and direct his albums "A Southern Memoir" and "Bingo Viejo" in 1975.



Paul Smith (seated) and Bing work on "Amapola".

Marilyn King, the last surviving member of popular singing family The King Sisters, died on August 7 following a battle with cancer. She was 82. Marilyn was the youngest of the siblings in the swing-era vocal group that made many records, toured for decades and appeared in films and on television. The King Sisters, originally from Utah and founded in 1931, appeared in several films and released more than 150 records for labels including Blue Bird, RCA Victor, Capitol and Warner Bros. throughout the 1940s, '50s and '60s. Marilyn began subbing at the age of 13 for her sisters (the original girls were Luise, Alyce, Donna and Yvonne) in their popular singing quartet at the height of the Big Band Era, and she officially joined the group in 1951. The family was the centerpiece of the popular 1960s ABC variety series *The King Family Show* as well as 17 *King Family* syndicated holiday specials throughout the years. The sisters toured for decades and made one of their final performances at the second inauguration of President Ronald Reagan in 1985. The Kings and Bing had a long history. At one time, Yvonne was married to Buddy Cole, and Bing actually recorded a special introduction to the first King Family special. The Family worked with him on the *Hollywood Palace* show on five occasions including the one pictured opposite. In the photo, Bing had just finished singing "You Make Me Feel So Young" with the King Kids.

Bing sings with the King Family. In the back row are the King Sisters, (l. to r., Yvonne, Alyce, Luise, and Marilyn).

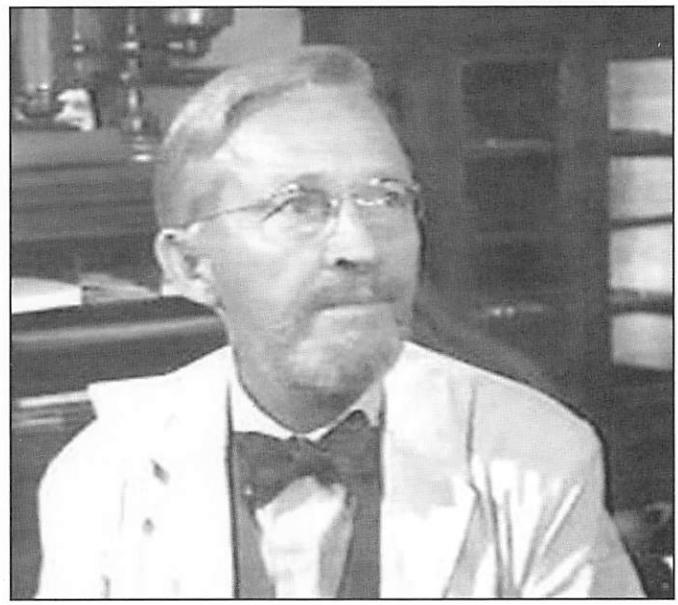
Eydie Gormé passed away on August 10 at the age of 84. She was not only a popular nightclub and television singer as a solo act but even more famous as a team with her husband, Steve Lawrence, Eydie was born in New York City to Sephardic Jewish parents and grew up speaking both English and Spanish. Gormé was a successful band singer and nightclub entertainer when she was invited to join the cast of Steve Allen's local New York television show in 1953. She sang solos and also did duets and comedy skits with Steve Lawrence, a rising young singer who had joined the show a year earlier. When the program became NBC's "Tonight Show" in 1954, the young couple went with it. They married in Las Vegas in 1957 and later performed for audiences there.

Although usually recognized for her musical partnership with Lawrence, Gormé broke through on her own with the Grammy-nominated "Blame It on the Bossa Nova" which was a huge solo hit in 1963. In the UK, her recording of "Yes, My Darling Daughter" reached #10 in the charts in 1962 and then she and Steve enjoyed a No. 3 hit in the UK with "I Just Want to Stay Here" the following year. She went on to score another solo hit in 1964, but this time for a Spanish-language recording. Columbia Records President Goddard Lieberson had suggested she put her Spanish fluency to use in the recording studio and the result was "Amor," recorded with the Mexican combo Trio Los Panchos.

Gormé and Lawrence regularly appeared on TV, including 13 appearances on *The Carol Burnett Show*, as well as *The Nanny*. She and Lawrence appeared together on Broadway in the musical, *Golden Rainbow*. After the 1970s, the couple focused strictly on the American pop repertoire, recording several albums themed around individual American pop composers.

Surprisingly, Steve and Eydie worked with Bing on only one occasion and this was when they appeared on the TV special "Tonight with Bing and Liza" which celebrated the Bell Telephone Jubilee and was broadcast on March 26, 1976.

Ted Post, who directed Bing in *Dr. Cook's Garden* (1971), died on August 20 at the age of 95. He studied acting in a workshop taught by a former actress with the Moscow Art Theater but soon gave up thoughts of becoming an actor and began directing at a summer stock theater on Long Island. After serving in the Army during World War II, he resumed directing in the theater. That included directing Bela Lugosi in a 1948 production of "Dracula" at the Norwich Summer Theatre in Connecticut.



Bing as Dr. Cook.

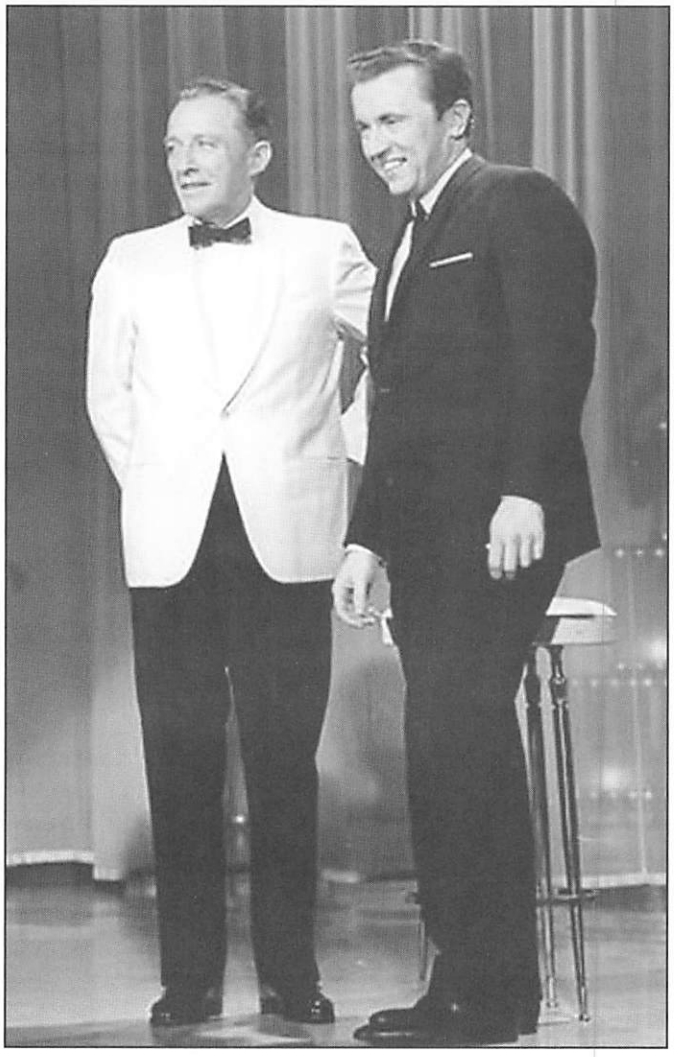
Beginning with an episode of the TV dramatic anthology series "Danger" in 1950, Post went on to direct segments of series such as "Medic," "Perry Mason," "The Rifleman" and "Gunsmoke." For television in the '60s, he directed series such as "Twilight Zone," "The Defenders," "Combat!" and, most frequently, "Peyton Place," the hit continuing romantic drama that aired up to three times per week. Post also directed more than 20 episodes of "Rawhide," the popular western series launched on CBS in 1959 starring Eric Fleming and Clint Eastwood.

After Eastwood's big-screen successes in Italian director Sergio Leone's "spaghetti westerns", the star insisted that Post direct his 1968 western *Hang 'em High*. Post went on to direct Eastwood in the 1973 film *Magnum Force*, the first of the "Dirty Harry" sequels featuring Eastwood's signature San Francisco police inspector, "Dirty" Harry Callahan, first seen in the Don Siegel-directed "Dirty Harry" two years earlier.

Among Post's other films were *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1970), *The Harrad Experiment* (1973) and *Go Tell the Spartans* (1978). He also directed the 1976-77 TV series "Rich Man, Poor Man — Book II" and the 1986 TV-movie remake of "Stagecoach."

Sir David Frost, the English journalist, comedian, writer, media personality and daytime TV game show host, died from a suspected heart attack on board the cruise ship *Queen Elizabeth* on August 31. He was 74. After graduating from Cambridge, Frost rose to prominence in the UK when he was chosen to host the

satirical programme *That Was the Week That Was* in 1962. His success on this show led to work as a host on US television. He became known for his television interviews with senior political figures, among them "The Nixon Interviews" with former United States President Richard Nixon in 1977, which were adapted into a stage play and film. Frost was one of the 'Famous Five' who were behind the launch of ITV breakfast station TV-am in 1983. For the BBC, he hosted the Sunday morning interview show *Breakfast with Frost* from 1993 to 2005. He spent two decades as host of *Through the Keyhole*. Frost fronted various programmes following the success of *TW3* including *The Frost Report,* broadcast between 1966 and 1967.



Bing welcomes David to the Hollywood Palace.

He appeared with Bing on the *Hollywood Palace* show of March 26, 1966. In 1968 Frost signed a contract worth £125,000 to appear on American television in his own show on three evenings each week, the largest such arrangement for a British television personality at the time. Bing and Louis Armstrong memorably guested on *The David Frost Show* on February 10, 1971.

Dante DiPaolo, the actor and dancer, died on September 3. He was 87. Dante was the late Rosemary Clooney's second husband. He was a successful dancer and he had originally met Rosemary in 1952 when he had to teach her to dance a few steps for the Bob Hope film *Here Come the Girls*. However as a youth, he played the character of "Turkey" in *The Star Maker* (1939) with Bing.

Dante (next to Bing) in *The Star Maker*

Subsequently Dante was featured in films such as *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (he played "Matt"), *Sweet Charity* (his character was named "Charlie") and in a number of Italian epics. Your editor met Dante at the Beverly Hills Hilton two years ago whilst researching the book "Late Life Jazz – the Life and Career of Rosemary Clooney" and in recalling *The Star Maker*, Dante leapt into song with "Go Fly a Kite" and was word perfect after all those years! He then gave me a rendition of "If I Was a Millionaire". Dante spoke very warmly of Bing. After he re-connected with Rosemary in 1973, he saw a lot of Bing particularly on the trips to the Palladium in 1976 and 1977.

A. C. Lyles, the producer and popular Paramount lot figure, died on September 27 at the age of 95. The gentlemanly and gregarious Lyles, deeply tanned and typically clad in an immaculate suit and crisp white shirt, was the last link on the lot to Paramount's golden era and to such stars as Bing, Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck and Dorothy Lamour. **Martin McQuade** takes up the story:

"Amazingly Lyles had worked at Paramount for over 80 years, beginning as an office clerk, and arose into the firmament to become a head production chief at the studio. Andrew Craddock, or AC, as he preferred to be called, would kindly take my calls placed to his office located in the AC Lyles Building on the Paramount lot, and vividly share reminiscences about the golden days of the studio. It seemed that his favorite topic was Bing. How he cherished his memories and always would credit Bing with the survival and tremendous success of his "alma mater." AC once recalled his first encounter with Bing. The star was riding on the lot on his bicycle one day while the teenager was working errands. Upon hearing the trademark whistling coming from the rider, AC became disoriented and walked right into the whistler, knocking him off his seat. Bing quipped. "Was

it my riding or my whistling, kid?" He then calmed the boy's embarrassment by asking him about himself. Once AC informed Bing that he was a breadwinner for his family, Bing took an immediate interest in him. Soon thereafter, AC received a large parcel of Bing Crosby records to give as Christmas gifts. A lifelong friendship developed, one among many with halcyon Hollywood legends. But AC took the time with everyone he met, and made me believe that I could be counted in that number, too. The Paramount gate has another overseer, and what privileged company he keeps!"

Martin McQuade

ICC member Gwen Harvey visited Hollywood in 1993 and wrote about A. C. Lyles' kindness to her in BING magazine #106.

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

For veteran Crosby fans who "remember when", the yuletide brings back vivid memories of a Crosby Christmas and the war time years of the 1940's. My two part Crosby Christmas from my radio and CD series "The Crosby Years", features Bing's fond recollections of his broadcasts and tours entertaining the young men and women in military service. Here are timely seasonal excerpts from my conversations with Bing at his home in Hillsborough, CA.

BING "We did a lot of shows in those days for the armed forces radio. They had a big installation in Hollywood because they had a lot of talent there including writers who had been writing for radio and they put them in the army made them sergeants and corporals. It was a big operation. We made a lot of programs, including "Mail Call" and "Command Performance". I did a lot of them with practically everybody who was in show business and who was in town. Those programs went out to servicemen all over the world wherever they were."

GORD We have talked about the great moments in your life both in sports and the entertainment. You wrote in your autobiography "Call Me Lucky", that the great thrill in your life was during the war when you went overseas to entertain the allied troops and were there at the same time with Fred Astaire. When I talked to Fred Astaire he fondly reminisced back to his time with you in France.

BING "Yes we flew to Cherbourg from somewhere in England. By that time our troops had taken Paris. Then our paths took different routes and I didn't see him again until up near Paris in a place called Melun. We spent about a week together; he was working one way and I was working another. But we did have breakfast together every morning at an officers' mess. They had local girls waiting on tables.

They didn't know us at all. It was kind of demeaning, we weren't recognized. We were kind of down in the dumps about it. But one morning one of the girls came running out of the kitchen screaming, holding a magazine aloft and waving it and there was Fred Astaire with Ginger Rogers. So he was established and they never did dig me. I was quite put down by the fact that Fred topped me there at Melun. Then I didn't see him again. He had some experiences he told me later, bombing and one thing and another that were quite interesting."

Fred and Bing try to get to know the local girls over breakfast.

GORD You had quite an interesting experience yourself.

BING "Yes, a couple of times we were in the crossfire, got in the wrong place at the wrong time; everybody was lost all the time with blackouts. You'd be driving from one area to another with what they called 'cats' eyes, you know those little wartime lights and you'd be with a special service officer who didn't know where he was either. He'd be lost wandering around getting into areas where he shouldn't be—a couple of times that happened. It always worked out alright though."

GORD It was at that time of course, that they tagged you with the name of 'Der Bingle'.

BING "I don't know how that got started. I made a couple of recordings with Glenn Miller for a broadcast to the troops. I spent about a week down at a place called Easton with Glenn and these things were broadcast to the troops and I guess the Germans heard them too and there was a guy named Bing singing there and they called me 'Der Bingle'."

GORD During the war years when Bing appeared on a radio show or in person before an audience of servicemen, he received frequent requests to sing 'White Christmas'. While on his lengthy overseas tour entertaining troops at the front he couldn't do a show without bringing a little bit of home to the front lines with 'White Christmas'.

BING "Well it was always a kind of wrench for me to sing the song, I loved the song of course, but particularly overseas in the field and camps and in field hospitals, places where spirits weren't too high anyway, they'd ask for this song and demanded that I sing it and half the audience would be in tears; you know it was rather a lugubrious atmosphere it created which you can understand I'm sure, because of its connection to home and Christmas and here we were thousands of miles

from home. It really was kind of a sorrowing experience to have to sing it for these fellows when it made them feel sad; I guess it was a glad kind of sadness.

I certainly didn't think 'White Christmas' was going to be such a hit. I thought it was a very good score for *Holiday Inn*. I had no preconceived idea of what would be the hit song. This one just stuck out, it was wartime, and so many people were away from home, away from their families, boys in the service, navy, marines and the army. A song like that is recognition of home and family and that's how it got kicked off, I think."

GORD Christmas will soon be here and for this Christmas and all the yuletides to follow, Bing would you extend a little Christmas greeting to all our listeners.

BING "Merry Christmas. I hope it's a happy one and finds everyone in good spirits. Merry Christmas!"

Bing speaking at his Hillsborough home during the third of our interview sessions for "The Crosby Years" - October 31, 1974. Happy holidays!

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: Gord's wonderful radio series, "The Crosby Years" remains available from him — see Trading Post for details.)

THE WAY WE WERE

The section of the magazine where we look at what was happening in years gone by.

75 YEARS AGO

On September 17, 1938, Bing and Dixie (plus son Gary) and Larry and Elaine Crosby boarded the "S. S. Queen of Bermuda" in New York for a three-week vacation in Bermuda. Later newspaper coverage indicated that Bing had spent the holiday fishing, golfing and playing tennis and had acquired a wonderful sun tan.

with brother Bob in Chicago.

During his absence, Bing's recording of "I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams" became the number one record in the charts for four weeks. En route from his vacation in Bermuda, Bing stopped over in Chicago to make his first recordings with his brother Bob, including "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby." Bob and his Bob Cats had been appearing at Chicago's Blackhawk restaurant.

Bing returned to the *Kraft Music Hall* show on October 20 and appeared each week until June 15, 1939. The audience share for the season came out at 24.5 which put the show in fourth place in the overall Hooper ratings for evening programs. Edgar Bergen's show was again in top place with a rating of 35.1.

The opening show garnered good reviews.

> With the return of Bing Crosby, last Thursday, this choice radio dish again became complete but only for one installment. Crosby has taken twelve weeks out and Bob Burns stayed long enough for a reconciliation before ducking for a four-week vacation. The Kraft Music Hall remains one of the few air packages that abound in suavity and good taste as well as entertainment.
>
> The combination of Crosby and Burns has a distinct and happy blend of personalities and there has been no letdown in the successful illusion of informality, camaraderie and surprise interpolation. The banter continues to lean towards the refreshing side and is run off with a subdued leisureliness that makes it a welcome contrast to the over eager shows.
>
> In guest formula, the show of last Thursday night had but one difference—there was no representative from the concert field. Instead of a masseur of the high C's or an ivory digiteer, the program produced Johnny Mercer and a finely, diverting paraphrase of one of his latest tunes, "There's [sic] Mutiny in the Nursery." Everybody in the cast but Walter Connolly participated and the upshot was as healthy a "plug" as any film release would want. The number is in Warner Brothers *Going Places*. Mercer and Crosby preceded this item with a banter of special material on the theme of "Small Fry" and a bit of lively minstrel crossfire that had Burns as interlocutor and a soft spot for the specimen of fine "needling" that accompanied the routine.
>
> The script's gift for mixing bright badinage worked nicely in the case of the two screen guestees, Joan Bennett and Walter Connolly. For the latter it finally got down to showing by example how the spoken word, can be, by deft shading be given various meanings, while Miss Bennett devoted most of her conversation to answering the critics who couldn't understand why her hair remained so firmly set in *The Texans*, despite her encounters with blizzards, dust storms, floods and whatnot. She also joined Crosby in applying their tonsils to the lyrics and melody of a current pop number.
>
> About the only element in this Thursday event that seems to show signs of sliding off key is the sustained gong-ringing gag. It used to be funny. Carroll Carroll, the show's writer should be able to dig up a substitute before the current one becomes an irritant.
>
> (*Variety*, October 26, 1938)

In December, Bing recorded a number of songs composed by Victor Herbert, some as solos and two as duets with Frances Langford.

> Bing Crosby also sings "Sweethearts" on Brunswick 02761. Here it is coupled with "Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life." These suit my temperament even better; what a depth and range the man has. These you must not miss.
> *(The Gramophone*, July, 1939)

Later that month, Bing acted as MC at the Shrine Auditorium in the *Los Angeles Examiner* Christmas benefit. Then it was back to the recording studios to work with John Scott Trotter.

> "It's a Lonely Trail" / "When the Bloom Is on the Sage"
> Bing Crosby with John Scott Trotter Orchestra. Decca 2237. Tunes which stay—and Crosby sings in that warm slow way which means all the more because he knows how to sing. "Lonely Trail" is the better of the two tunes.
> (Daily News [Los Angeles], March 1, 1939)

On Christmas Day morning at 8:15 a.m., there was a live broadcast on NBC from Bing's home as his children opened their presents. Ken Carpenter gave a commentary from behind the couch!

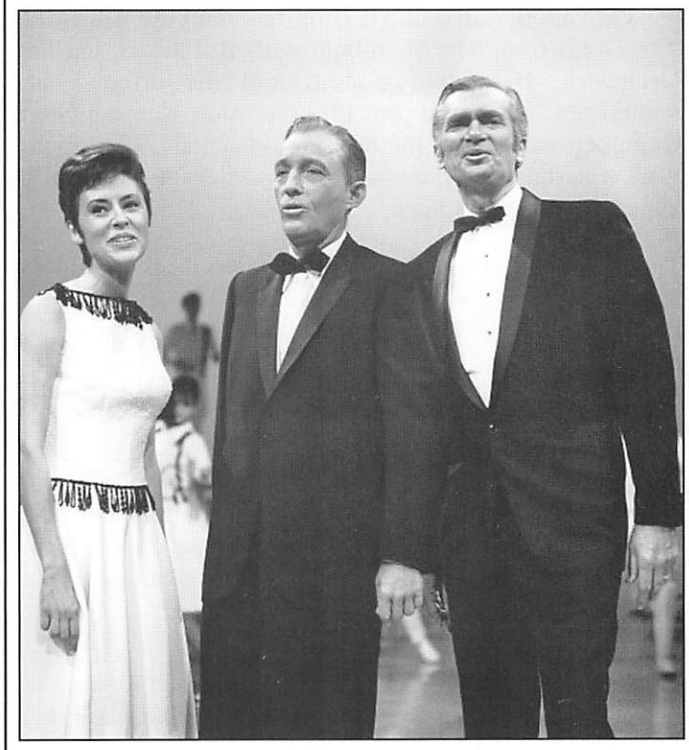
The year finished with Bing and brother Bob's "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby" sitting at the top of the charts. Song promoters voted Bing "Number One Crooner of the United States" and during 1938, Bing had fifteen songs that became chart hits.

50 YEARS AGO

We take up the story in September 1963 and towards the end of the month, President Kennedy again spent a weekend at Bing's Palm Desert house. The arrangements had been made through Bing's friend Chris Dunphy. Bing wasn't there as he was taping *The Bing Crosby Show* with Caterina Valente, André Previn, and Buddy Ebsen which was shown by CBS-TV on November 7.

In October, Alan Fisher (accompanied by his wife, Norma) commenced work as butler to the Crosbys. Bing began filming *Robin and the Seven Hoods* with Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., and Peter Falk. He was paid $100,000 for his work. The producer at the outset was Gene Kelly and the director was Gordon Douglas. Bing became concerned at developments with the *Robin and the Seven Hoods* movie and wrote to his agent Bob Coryell as follows:

> Talking to Howard Koch last night, and he gave me some rather surprising news. He said it was their intention to shoot a musical number with me, then lay me off three weeks, and do some other things. He indicated that he'd want me to be working, or to be available up into January. This, of course, hardly agrees with our original agreement whereby I was to work four weeks consecutively.
>
> As you know, I've been going over to Warners almost daily since the 3rd or 4th of October – I can't remember which – and if they plan on holding me in the bullpen or working until January, it would amount to something like twelve weeks. Maybe more.
>
> I think you ought to have a talk with Koch about this, and I'll talk to him about it myself today when I go to rehearsal.
>
> Quite privately, I'm very disturbed about the removal of Gene Kelly as the producer. This was one of the major factors which influenced my desire to make the film. I felt that Kelly would be an outstanding producer of a musical show, and the initial work that he did – the preparation and everything else inclined me to think that he was really going to have a fine musical.
>
> I don't know what will happen now since he's been removed, although the elements are still there. It just depends upon whose hands it falls into. I believe it's going to be Sinatra and Koch.
>
> I mention this because if there's any problem about the time that I'm supposed to be working on the picture, I'd just as soon get out of it – although this is something that I would hold back and not reveal until you have sounded them out and gotten back to me.
>
> Maybe before you talk to anybody, you and I should get together on the phone, or I can come by the office, or you can come by the studio.
>
> Give me a ring.
>
> Bing



with Caterina Valente and Buddy Ebsen

Meanwhile Bing and Kathryn were spending weekends in the San Francisco area looking for a new house and sadly around this time, Bing's mother suffered a severe stroke and was moved into a nursing home.

Apart from his filming activities, Bing was busy in the recording studio laying down further tracks for the

Return to Paradise Islands LP with an orchestra conducted by Nelson Riddle for Reprise Records in Los Angeles. Although the trade reaction was favourable the response from British fans in *The Crosby Post* was mixed with some complaining that the orchestral backing drowned Bing's voice.

Return to Paradise Islands
Bing turns on the charm again. This 1964 version of Der Bingle is calm, relaxed and very much in tune with this South Seas material. The tunes, for the most part, are out of the usual standard fare. Nelson Riddle's backings are fruitful and are certainly enough to make the old master and his vocal backings sway in the breeze. "Adventures in Paradise" is a fine middle of the road programming track.
(*Billboard*, February 1, 1964)

Bing also recorded "Do You Hear What I Hear" and "Christmas Dinner Country Style" with Ralph Carmichael and his Orchestra for Capitol Records in Los Angeles and this reached No. 3 in the Christmas singles list in the USA and No. 49 in the *Melody Maker* charts in the UK.

Towards the end of October, Bing taped a TV special with Rosemary Clooney, Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin which was eventually broadcast in February 1964. Bob Hope had to leave the studio suffering from an eye ailment before he had completed his segment and this was eventually taped early in February.

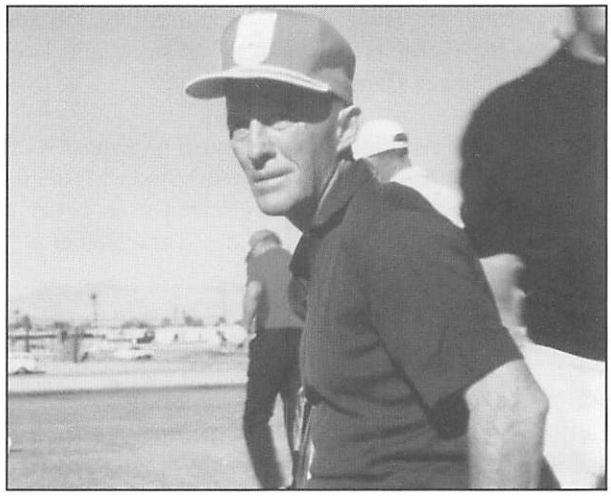
On October 29 and 31, Bing recorded the songs for *The Great Country Hits* album with Bill Justis and his Orchestra. Bing had a cold and the effects can sometimes be heard on the recorded songs. Glen Campbell was one of the backing musicians. The album was welcomed by the reviewers when it eventually appeared two years later.

The consistency of Bing Crosby's talent over the decades is an authentic show biz phenomenon. In this set, the veteran singer finds himself in a very congenial groove with a group of backwoods ballads which he delivers with an easygoing lilt just tailored for this material.
(*Variety*, October 13, 1965)

For the first time Crosby devotes his vast musical talent to only top country material. Demonstrating his feeling and understanding of lyric in such standouts as the classic "Four Walls" and "Jealous Heart." Crosby maintains his own great style.
(*Billboard*, October 16, 1965)

In November, Bing was in San Francisco looking at houses again. He subsequently arranged to sell his Holmby Hills house for $250,000 and to buy a twenty-five room property at 101 Robin Road in Hillsborough, San Francisco which was formerly the home of the late Douglas Alexander and his wife. The purchase price was quoted as $175,000 by the press.

On November 11, Mr. Crosby played in the pro-celebrity match which concluded the Frank Sinatra Invitational Golf Tournament at Canyon Country Club, Palm Springs.



Bing takes a breather during the Frank Sinatra Invitational Golf Tournament.

Later that day, starting at 7:00 p.m., Bing was one of many stars entertaining at a thirty dollars a plate charity dinner held in the Grand Ballroom of the Riviera Hotel. During the evening, Bing was filmed being presented with a Lifetime Achievement Grammy from the Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences by Frank Sinatra. It was intended that the film would be used in an NBC special at the Grammy Awards event to be called "The Best on Record" which was supposed to be televised on November 24 but was cancelled because of the death of President Kennedy on November 22. Following this Bing wrote to Mrs. Kennedy.

Dear Mrs. Kennedy,
My wife, Kathryn and I want very much to extend our sympathies and condolences to you because of your tragic and insupportable loss. We felt Jack Kennedy to be a brilliant decent dedicated man, and we both think we shall not see his like again on the national scene. Your composure courage and quiet dignity through the crushing ordeal of last weekend was a source of inspiration to the millions who watched and prayed with you.
With all sincere sentiments
Bing Crosby

On November 24, Bing taped his part in Bob Hope's Christmas special, and because of Bob's continuing eye problems, he acted as cohost with Jack Benny as well as miming to his recording of "Do You Hear What I Hear." The show was televised by NBC on December 13.

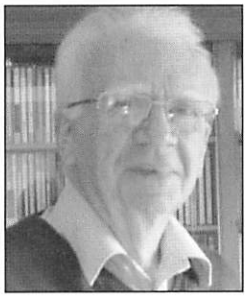
Filming work on *Robin and the Seven Hoods* was dislocated by the death of JFK and it was further delayed when Frank Sinatra Jr. was kidnapped at gunpoint and held for ransom on December 8 before being released three days later when his father paid a $240,000 ransom.

After completing her practical work in the maternity ward, Kathryn was given her nursing diploma at Queen of Angels School of Nursing on December 19.

Bing's busy period was not yet over for the year because on December 28, he taped the first ever *Hollywood Palace* television show which was shown on January 4, 1964. The guests included Mickey Rooney, Nancy Wilson, and Gary Crosby. This was the first of his 32 appearances on this long running series.

KEEPING TRACK

Richard Baker looks at the new releases



COMPACT DISCS

Bing Sings The Johnny Mercer Songbook Bing Crosby Enterprises B0018921-02 £10-£11 (UK) $12- $13 (US) Also available as download

1. P.S. I Love You *(Woodbury Soap Oct. 30 1934)* 2. I'm An Old Cowhand (D) 3. Too Marvelous for Words (D*) (take A)* 4. You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby (D*) (take A)* 5. Day In, Day Out *(KMH Oct. 26 1939)* 6. I Thought About You *(KMH Feb. 1 1940)* 7. Mister Meadowlark (with Johnny Mercer) (D) 8. Skylark (D) 9. Blues in the Night (D) 10. That Old Black Magic *(KMH April 15 1943)* 11. On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe (D) 12. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (with the Andrews Sisters) (D) 13. Lazy Bones (with Louis Armstrong) *(Chesterfield Jan. 25 1950)* 14. Autumn Leaves (*Chesterfield Nov. 29 1950)* 15. In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening *(Chesterfield Oct. 24 1951*) 16. Jamboree Jones *(Chesterfield Nov. 28 1951*) 17. When the World Was Young (Ah, the Apple Trees) *(Chesterfield Nov. 14 1951)* 18. Glow Worm *(G.E. Nov. 9 1952)* 19. Jeepers Creepers *(G.E. March 12 1953)* 20. And The Angels *Sing (G.E. May 7 1953)* 21. Something's Gotta *Give (BC Show June 23 1955)* 22. P.S. I Love You *(G.E. Nov. 18 1953)*

A very nice mixture of the original Decca recordings {indicated by (D)}, and radio. I have seen some protests that certain songs with Johnny are not included, but this is what the title says it is - Bing singing the Mercer songbook and not Bing singing with Johnny Mercer. Indeed, on some of the songs where we are used to the Mercer voice joining with Bing, we have Bing solo. The sound quality needs particular comment. For the tracks from 13 onwards must come from the original tapes, and they are a revelation. But even "Day In, Day Out" and "I Thought About You" from KMH of 1939 and 1940 are in far better quality sound than we might expect, whilst this version of "That Old Black Magic" has joined my list of favourites.

The pity of it is that there is other material written by Mercer and recorded by Bing both for record and radio and there are a few mildly surprising omissions, though I don't envy the job of the producer in making the selection. I hope those gaps might yet be filled.

I was delighted to see radio versions of some of the songs instead of the better known studio versions, and the difference in performance is refreshing. Many of these versions will be new to most collectors and in some cases I certainly prefer them to the official Decca releases. Altogether this is a very enjoyable issue and I highly recommend it.

Le Bing: Song Hits Of Paris; 60th Anniversary DeLuxe Edition Bing Crosby Enterprises B0018939-02 £10-£11 (UK) $12- $13 (US) Also available as download

1. Mademoiselle de Paris 2. Embrasse-Moi Bien 3. Mon Coeur Est Un Violon 4. La Vie En Rose 5. La Seine 6. Au Bord de l'eau 7. La Mer 8. Tu Ne Peux Pas Te Figurer

"Bonus Tracks" – Radio - 9. Allez Vous En *(GE Oct. 18 1953)* 10. Domino *(GE May 28 1953)* 11. C'est Si Bon (with Jane Morgan) *(GE Oct. 25 1953)* 12. Where Is Your Heart (Song from Moulin Rouge) *(GE Oct. 18 1953)* 13. I Love Paris *(GE Oct.11 1953 – also released as Decca L7513)* 14. All My Love (Bolero) *(GE June 4 1953)* 15. And He'd Say Ooh-La-La! Wee Wee / How You Gonna Keep 'em Down on the Farm (After They've Seen Paree) / Oui Oui, Marie (with Lindsay Crosby) (*GE June 11 1953)*

Original issues – 16. Mademoiselle de Paris (English) 17. Embrasse-Moi Bien (English)

Radio – 18. Embrasse-Moi Bien (French) *(GE May 28 1953)* 19. Mon Coeur Est Un Violin (false start, breakdown & take 4) 20. Cela M'Est Egal (If It's All the Same to You) (with Lindsay Crosby) (*GE June 18 1953)* 21. La Seine (English/French version - take 2, breakdown, pickup) 22. La Seine (pickup with French chorus) 23. La Seine (English/French version - broadcast edit) (*GE June 18 1953)*

The original LP holds a special place in the history of Crosby LP issues, as it is usually reckoned to be Bing's first "concept" album. Whilst earlier LP issues assembled in a thematic way, they consisted of 78 rpm sides recorded

over the 1930s and 40s. The first eight tracks were recorded in French and were on the original 10 inch LP recorded in Paris in May 1953 with the Paul Durand Orchestra, whilst tracks 16 and 17 in English were recorded at the same time and released on a Decca single.

This CD reflects history in another way: Bing had won his fight with the radio networks in 1946 to enable him to pre-record his shows. But early on those shows were recorded as a single entity, with an audience, and with guest artists. Bing took son Lindsay on a trip to Europe in 1953, from 21st March, returning on 30th June. During this period the regular Bing Crosby Shows for General Electric were broadcast as if from Paris. In reality all the songs had been recorded during intensive sessions in Palm Springs prior to departure. At best some of Bing's linking dialogue might have been recorded in France, though I have doubts even about that. The CD includes a number of the songs "laid down" for this use and broadcast in Bing's absence as if from Paris. Included also are some studio attempts and out-takes (tracks 21-23), all for a broadcast transmitted on June 18 1953.

Bing Crosby Enterprises have here brought together both original studio recordings made in France and the French themed songs from the radio shows, with some duplication of titles but different treatment. I give the broadcast dates.

It is really good to have them all packaged with a front cover that is a neat facsimile of the original, complete with the US Decca imprints.

The comments about audio quality on the Mercer issue remain true here. The studio attempts/ breakdowns and pickups will be new even to the most avid and dedicated collectors.

I have a slight fear that some generalist collectors might find things just a little repetitive, but I'm delighted and I am sure that this will be true of the majority of fans.

Bing Crosby Sings for the Armed Forces Radio SEPIA 1242 £7 - £8 (UK) $17 - $20 (US) Also available as download

1. Command Performance Introduction *(brief CP generic intro)* 2. Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in Ireland *(CP#17 June 11 1942)* 3. It's a Long Way to Tipperary (with Dinah Shore) *(CP#54 Feb. 24 1943) 4.* Candlelight and Wine *(CP#104 Feb. 1 1944)* 5. De Camptown Races (with Richard Crooks) *(CP#52 Feb. 14 1943) 6.* It Can't Be Wrong *(CP#71 June 19 1943)* 7. Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer *(CP VE Day Show May 1945)* 8. It Ain't Necessarily So (with Dinah Shore) *(CP#54 Feb. 24 1943)* 9. Great Day *(CP#60 April 1 1943)* 10. Dialogue with Jack Benny and Gary Cooper *(CP#125 June 17 1944)* 11. My Blue Heaven *(CP#125 June 17 1944)* 12. Cuddle Up A Little Closer *(GIJ#11 Sept. 24 1943) 13.* One Alone *(CP#125 June 17 1944)* 14. Shoo-Shoo Baby *("Jubilee" Jan. 10 1944) 15.* People Will Say We're In Love (with Judy Garland) *(CP#81 Aug. 28 1943) 16.* Put Your Arms Around Me, Honey *(GIJ#10 Sept. 17 1943)* 17. My Wild Irish Rose *(GIJ#10 Sept. 17 1943)* 18. My Ideal (with The Les Paul Trio) *(MC#78 Feb.16 1944)* 19. Something to Remember You By (with Judy Garland) *(CP#122 June 3 1944)* 20. The Groaner, the Canary and the Nose (with Judy Garland and Jimmy Durante) *(MC#91 May 17 1944)* 21. Timber/In the Evening by the Moonlight/You Are My Sunshine (with Richard Crooks) *(MC#78 Feb. 16 1944)* 22. This Heart of Mine *(CP#169 April 5 1945) 23.* My Old Kentucky Home (with Dinah Shore) *(CP#36 Oct. 13 1942)* 24. Gotta Be This or That *("Jubilee" Dec. 1945) 25.* Ridin' Herd on a Cloud *(GIJ#9 Sept. 10 1943)* 26. Blue Hawaii (with Connie Haines) *(MC#102 July 26 1944)* 27. Sweet Leilani *(MC#102 July 26 1944) 28.* In My Merry Oldsmobile (with Linda Darnell, Andy Devine, Mel Blanc, Ransom Sherman) *(GIJ#52 July 14 1944)* 29. Medley with Judy Garland: Hand Me Down My Walking Cane/De Camptown Races/Beyond the Blue Horizon/The Music Stopped/My Old Kentucky Home/Alabamy Bound/Goodnight, Wherever You Are *(CP#129 July 15 1944)*

The number of listeners who were around at the time and who heard these broadcasts are diminishing rapidly, and Malcolm Macfarlane, in his notes to the issue, makes the interesting point that many U.S. civilians would not have heard them at all – they were for the troops abroad and broadcast in the various war zones locally. Civilians in Britain had a better chance to hear them than civilians in the U.S., as they were transmitted over the BBC Forces network each Monday. The tracks are mainly drawn from the Command Performance broadcasts, but also Mail Call, G.I. Journal and "Jubilee" shows as indicated. Because they were recorded to transcription discs for use by the radio stations the audio quality is in general better than some other surviving broadcasts of the era. We have examples of immediacy and spontaneity, with deliberate attempts to keep things light–hearted in those war-torn years. Audience reaction and a few lead-in introductions are included with full vocal audience participation on several tracks. It is good to have pairings that did not happen on commercial issues with Dinah Shore, early in her career, and Connie Haines. Interestingly, some of the titles hark back to the days of WW1 – an odd example of nostalgia in the midst of WW2. The last track, a medley with inter-song "business" with Judy Garland is a true delight. The whole CD immerses you in the atmosphere of the times with several remarks addressed directly to servicemen, and of course there are some songs never sung by Bing on commercial issues, or only with a different treatment. A valuable issue, with very well chosen selections to be representative of the times, with Bing at the height of his abilities. A true delight.

Bing Crosby & Rosemary Clooney: The New Recordings **H&H Music £11:99 (UK)**

At the time of writing this issue appears to have limited outlets – direct from the issuers – H&H Music (http://www.handhmusic.co.uk) or Good-Music.biz.

1. You're Just in Love (Duet) 2. With All My Heart 3. Half As Much (RC) 4. Just Around The Corner 5. No Letter Today (RC) 6. Isn't This a Lovely Day (Duet) 7. Our Love Affair (RC) 8. Only Forever (Duet) 9. Serenade in the Night 10. Sway (RC) 11. Yours 12. Thrill Me (RC) 13. Something to Remember You By (Duet) 14. My Funny Valentine 15. I'll Be Around (RC) 16. Medley - September Song/ As Time Goes By /Til We Meet Again (Duet) 17. Summertime (Duet) 18. Ebb Tide (RC) 19. Arrivederci Roma 20. Man (Uh-Huh) and Woman (Uh-Huh) (Duet) 21. (Oh Baby Mine) I Get So Lonely 22. Memories of You (RC) 23. My Own True Love 24. Lonely Am I (RC) 25. Goodnight, Sweet Dreams, Mary Lou 26. Brahms' Lullaby (RC) 27. Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep 28. What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Listed titles are solos by Bing except where indicated as duet or RC = Rosemary Clooney solo.

Here is a surprise, and it's likely to cause some controversy, so I'll take some time with it. The CD consists of some new "overdubs" giving new instrumentals to songs mostly (but not solely) originally recorded with the Buddy Cole group for radio use in the 1950s.

I do not intend to go into the ethics, still less the legalities of this activity, but on the matter of musical treatment must make my own position clear: I dislike meddling with an artist's work after their death, and obviously without their consent. They had a concept: they knew what they were doing and had the opportunity to approve the work (or otherwise) before release. However, if modern audio recording treatment had been available to Bing, he would have used it. Whether the current efforts would have met with his approval is a moot point.

In some ways I liked many of the original Barnes/Moore over-dubbings made within a couple of years of Bing's death: they added orchestral colour to the small rhythm group, but the basic rhythm remained with free orchestral treatment behind. The current release tries an alternative and raids similar source material. In the words of the producer, writing on an internet site –

> *"A majority of the recordings had only bass, piano and drum accompaniment. Also, there was no reverb on their voices. This was a producer's dream come true because it allowed me to build on top of it - - they were mono and sounded one dimensional. We cleaned them up and then I had my musicians play note for note on top of the originals - - This transformed the songs into stereo. We also added other sweetening instrumentally—many subtle touches, including glissandos, arpeggios, a variety of string treatments ranging from pizzicato - - to double stopping, spiccato, etc."*

But in my view "to build on top of it" implies that the foundations are being buried.

From the sonic point of view the revised tracks work beautifully. Bing's voice is undoubtedly enriched and we have a glorious stereo spread and depth of sound. We even have some sound effects on Rosemary's "Ebb Tide".

Musically, the results, in my view, are more mixed. The oldest source used ("What a Friend We Have in Jesus" from the commercial Decca release of 1949), has been improved enormously. The duets, fairly free in their musical treatment, also benefit - "Man (Uh-Huh) and Woman (Uh-Huh)" exemplifies this, and the slower, relaxed numbers gain from the extra colour, but the improvement is partly negated in the more upbeat numbers by the dominant rhythm: there seems to be a multiplying effect – laying a second lot of rhythm on the original is possibly overdoing it.

Heard through full range equipment, the string bass has a dominant role on many tracks, though on some equipment this will be less obvious. A "country and western" sound emerges from time to time and the accompanying notes present this as a virtue, but I think it detracts from the performance, fortunately only affecting a couple of Rosemary's songs in any obvious way. On the more rhythmic tracks the rhythm becomes overstated – to my ears it becomes mechanical (e.g. "Yours") in comparison to the originals which are "looser" and free moving. *There is blessing wrapped up in this – Buddy Cole's organ interruptions (which I have always hated) have been omitted or obscured by overlaying alternative instrumentation.*

It could be argued that if the tracks were recorded just a few years later in stereo, this is the way that they would emerge. This might be true from the technical point of view, but Bing selected those artists to work with him – Buddy Cole, Nick Fatool et al: they had a particular approach and style and attempts to replicate it are bound to be artificial copies. No artist now can put themselves in the same shoes.

Overall I am sure that the issue will attract a lot of support and positive comment: it will delight very many because it sounds very good indeed to any casual listener: if it widens the number of fans that is good. But I think that there are others who are familiar with the originals and who will have, like me, more mixed opinions. To sum up – I personally dislike the whole idea, but concede that the result is very attractive sonically and to some extent musically.

Christmas With Bing **Bing Crosby Enterprises/Sony 8837 4932 around $8**

1. Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer 2. Just What I Wanted For Christmas 3. The Secret of Christmas 4. Peace on Earth/The Little Drummer Boy (with David Bowie) 5. The White World of Winter 6. Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow! 7. It's Christmas Time Again 8. Marshmallow World (with Ella Fitzgerald) 9. Good King Wenceslas 10. Joy to the World 11. Christmas Star 12. O Little Town of Bethlehem 13. Away In a Manger (with Kathryn Crosby) 14. The Night Before Christmas

Now here's a mystery. I have been sent a scan of the cover of this CD apparently released by Bing Crosby Enterprises and with their logo, but also with the Sony imprint. It is listed on some websites (e.g. Barnes & Noble and AllMusic) at around $8 and as having been issued on August 1st but at the time of writing none have it in stock. It is not mentioned on the www.Bingcrosby.com site or Facebook page, nor listed by Amazon, and I would not expect the Sony imprint, so I have to be uncertain at this time about its status.

"Christmas Star" would be the first official release on CD and "Away in a Manger", presumably drawn from a December 1960 radio show, would be totally new to CD as would "The Night Before Christmas", which could be 1951 radio or 1974 TV. Otherwise six titles are shared (though they might not be the same recordings) with "The Crosby Christmas Sessions" on BCE/Collectors' Choice CCM 2161 of three years ago. I have inadequate information to be sure of the sources of all the tracks, which might be either radio or original commercial issues. This issue should not be confused with others with the same or similar titles which are older but have different content.

DVD and Blu-ray

Going Hollywood (DVD) **WB Archive Collection** **Around $19 (US)**

NTSC Format, Region free, Ratio 1.37:1

Though the manufacturer states that it has not been remastered or restored, the picture quality is clear with very good contrast. Famous for the high jinks off set rather than on, but still quite enjoyable. Clips with Bing singing the title song seem to recur in many other compilations, but the complete film is certainly of interest.

High Time (Blu-ray only) **Screen Archives Entertainment Exclusive** **Around $30 (US)**

Aspect ratio: 2.35:1

A limited edition of 3000 only, and prices I have seen vary enormously, even up to $60. I have it on good authority that the video quality is very clear, detailed and bright however. The issue of Blu-ray films seems to be gaining momentum and it is interesting to see one of the less popular (though still good) films getting this treatment.

(Editor: I got mine for $29.95 plus shipping. I watched the film from beginning to end, the first time I have done that in many years and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It is a charming film and Bing still had a lot to give at that stage of his career. Seeing it in High Definition really helps too.)

Mississippi (DVD-R) **Universal Vault Series** **Around $15 (US)**

NTSC, Region 1, ratio 1.33:1

I have not seen this version which is being sold through Amazon (US) and where it has had very mixed comment about the technical quality, scoring more adverse reviews than anything positive. I personally have reservations about "manufacturing to order" of DVD-Rs and believe it likely that such a system contributes to inconsistent quality.

The Bells Of St Mary's **Olive Films** **Around $22 -$26 (Blu-ray) (US)**
Around $15-$18 (DVD) (US)

Olive films have announced the simultaneous release on November 19th of "Bells" on both Blu-ray and DVD. Something to look forward to for the Blu-ray fans, though there have been earlier issues on DVD. The new issues include a bonus feature "The Look of Love: An Essay by Film Critic R. Emmet Sweeney".

On The Net

Several interesting items have appeared for sale on the internet. At an asking price of $3,000 there was a collection of Bing's hunting memorabilia, including two hunting licences, an account with pictures of a hunting trip in 1966 to Magdalena Bay, Mexico and several awards for conservation.

The British branch of eBay had a Gold Record awarded for sales of "At My Time of Life" reaching 250,000 in 1976, at a starting price of £300.

Also in Britain, a collection formerly belonging to Alan Fisher, Bing's butler, sold at auction for £75,000. It

included items he obtained from employers other than Bing but there were some things with Crosby connections. These included a pair of Waterford Crystal candlesticks given by Bing to Fisher and engraved "Alan Fisher, Hero" which later sold on eBay for £53.09.

Downloads

For some little while things have been developing in the sphere of downloads. Amazon have a service named "Amazon Instant Video", enabling those who have suitable broadband connections to rent or buy videos for instant viewing. At present the service is much more restricted on the eastern side of the Atlantic, so much of what follows relates to North America only at present. Prices vary, but rentals typically range from $2 - $4 for a 24 hour viewing right and $8 - $20. for purchase. Viewers can use PS3, Xbox, Kindle Fire, iPad, PC and other devices to see the content. Some are in high definition. I am uncertain of the precise implication of "high definition" in this context, and could find no definition within the Amazon website, but found a reference elsewhere which suggests a resolution of up to 1280x800.

Titles which caught my eye, in no particular order, include -

"The Hollywood Palace: Bing Crosby Christmas Show" "White Christmas" "Riding High [HD]"

"Here Comes The Groom" "The Adventures of Ichabod And Mr. Toad" "High Society" "The All-Star Christmas Show Starring Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, George Burns and Milton Berle" "My Favorite Brunette & Road To Bali [Double Feature]" "Road to Zanzibar [HD]" "Holiday Inn [HD]" "Road to Morocco [HD]" "The Country Girl" "Road To Hollywood" "Going My Way"

Separately, Amazon has introduced a service named "Autorip" under which purchasers of CDs are automatically entitled to a download version of the CD. This right has been backdated (I was recently invited to take up my rights for many past purchases). Many people already "rip" newly acquired CDs to computers or personal playing devices, but this makes things simpler, again if they possess reasonable broadband connections.

I assume that other suppliers may have similar services – I mention Amazon as the dominant presence.

Richard Baker **bakerstonb@gmail.com**

"Lucky Bing" - Bing Crosby and American Radio

This was the title of a lecture given by Dr Adrienne McLean, a Professor at the University of Texas in Dallas. The publicity stated:

Wednesday, September 25, 2013
7:00pm until 8:30pm in CDT
Student Union | Galaxy Room A

Our Fall 2013 Lecture Series begins with a presentation on Bing Crosby with Dr. Adrienne L. McLean, Professor of Film Studies.

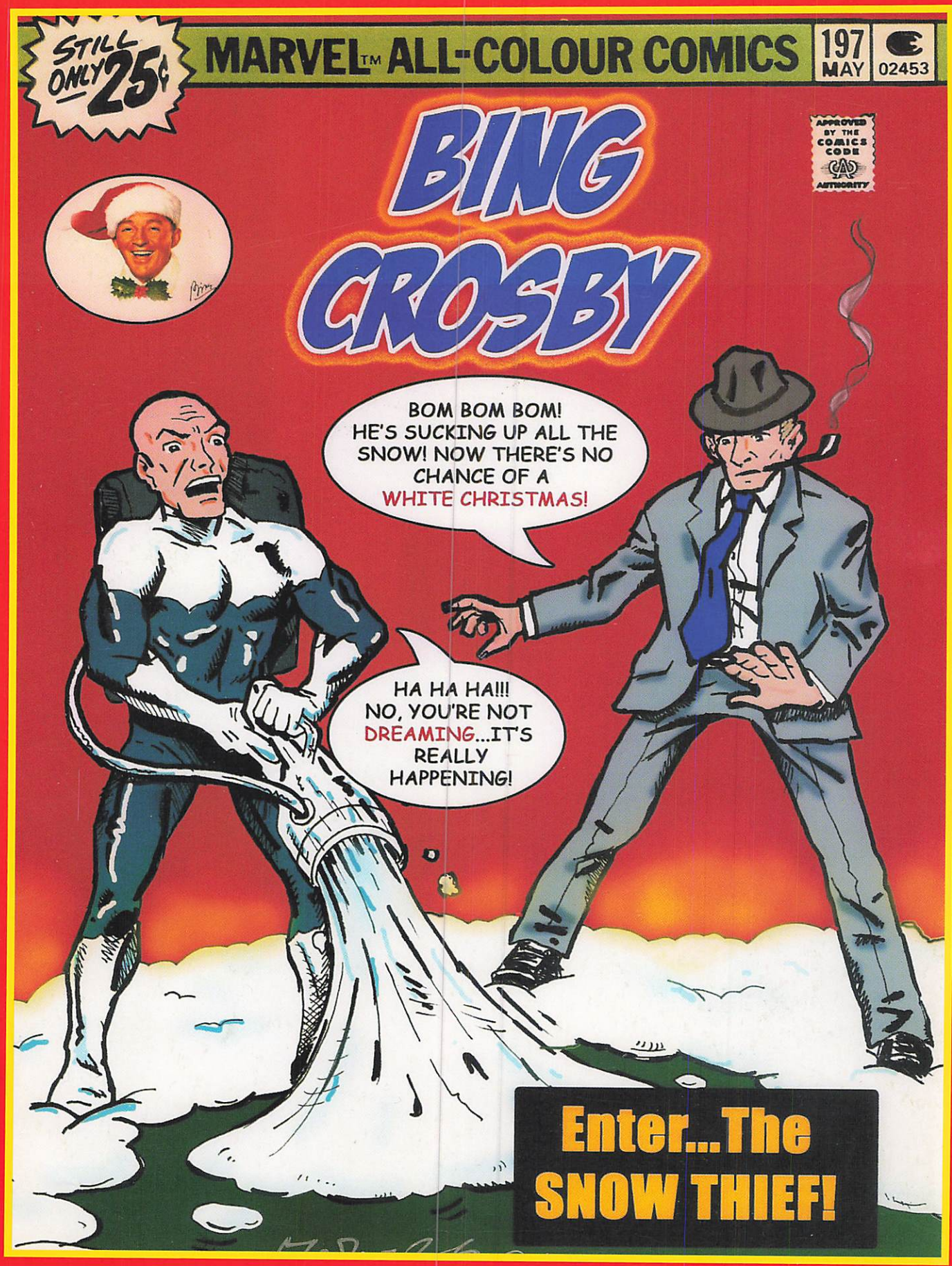
This presentation will explore the radio career of Bing Crosby (1903-1977), arguably the most popular radio performer of all time and one of the first, if not the first, true multimedia stars. Crosby's popularity spanned film, records, and television from the early 1930s until his death, but was rooted in the technologies of radio, including tape recording, which he was among the first to exploit and which changed broadcasting, in all forms, forever (one writer has called Crosby "a grandfather to the computer hard drive and an angel investor in one of the firms that created Silicon Valley," issues that will also be discussed).

Cookies and refreshments will be provided!

Good to see that students are being told about Bing. The feedback on the Facebook page was good too!

Emily Joyce - Great lecture, great cookies!

Bill Brenda Mikesell - Excellent lecture!


STILL ONLY 25¢
MARVEL™ ALL-COLOUR COMICS
197 MAY
02453
BING CROSBY
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BOM BOM BOM! HE'S SUCKING UP ALL THE SNOW! NOW THERE'S NO CHANCE OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS!
HA HA HA!!! NO, YOU'RE NOT DREAMING...IT'S REALLY HAPPENING!
Enter...The SNOW THIEF!

Designed & printed by dh3 digital ltd., Print Works, Broadwood View,
Ropery Lane, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham DH3 3NJ U.K.
Tel: +44 (0)191 387 4248 Email: dh3@live.com